

# Christian Orient

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## ECCLESIOLOGY

### EDITORIAL

THE *TOMA MARGA*: ICON OF THE INDO-ORIENTAL IDENTITY OF  
THE THOMAS CHRISTIANS OF INDIA

- Sr. Prasanna Vazheeparampil, CMC.

THE PERSIAN CROSSES IN INDIA ARE CHRISTIAN NOT MANICHAEAN

Rev. Dr. Jacob Kollaparampil

CHURCH AS THE MEETING PLACE OF LITURGY AND THEOLOGY

Rev. Dr. Joseph Kallarangatt

BOOK REVIEWS, NEWS



# CHRISTIAN ORIENT

An Indian Journal of Eastern Churches for Creative  
Theological Thinking

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# Editorial

## Oriental Identity and Catholicity

Communion is a topic which is being largely discussed in ecclesiology and ecumenism. The importance of this concept is indeed great in understanding the very nature and mission of the Church. The Church came into being for building up communion at all levels. The eternal communion of the three Divine persons is the basis of this vision of the Church. The people of God are being initiated and integrated into the divine communion through baptism. This rediscovery of the true nature of the Church as the communion of churches by Vatican II, leads us to a new vision of the Church.

The various vicissitudes of history have paved the way for developing a centralized structure in which the aspects of uniformity seem to have gained priority over unity in diversity. In such a situation the Eastern Churches which have a unique heritage of their own found it difficult to maintain their identity and communion. This problem is really acute in the case of the Eastern Catholic Churches which are in communion with Rome.

The decree of Vatican II on the Eastern Churches begins by pointing out the uniqueness of these churches and their authenticity: "For distinguished as they are by their venerable antiquity they are bright with that tradition which was handed down from the apostles through the Fathers, and which forms part of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the Universal Church" (OE 1). This distinctiveness of the churches with their apostolic heritage, protected, interpreted and promoted by the Fathers and lived on by successive generations of Christians, is sanctioned by the Church as their authentic source. This venerable patrimony of the early churches forms part of the universal heritage of the Catholic Church. Hence the renewal of the Church should merge from an awareness and reawakening of their identity and sense of responsibility.

Genuine communion is not possible without authenticity and identity. Communion is between persons. Persons are unique and the society consists of persons. Communion brings persons into closer relations. It is an interpersonal relation. Persons without identity are unable to enter into communion. Self awareness is an essential prerequisite for every human relation. The understanding and appreciation of the ecclesial heritage of each Church is the result of this awareness. The Churches have inherited from ancient times a definite tradition and identity. This tradition and identity have shaped the distinctiveness of the various churches. Their faith tradition is being accepted, professed and lived by the community and their common heritage with other churches is the bond of their ecclesial communion. The Church wants the churches to remain faithful to these traditions which form the basis for ecclesial communion: "For it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or rite retain its traditions whole and entire while adjusting its way of life to the various needs of time and place" (OE 2).

This awareness of the identity is being built up through proper ecclesial formation. In the Church the clergy are officially constituted for imparting the



authentic formation. The sacrament of Holy Orders is the public, official and sacramental authorization conferred on them. If these official leaders are not properly rooted in their authentic ecclesial traditions the community will lose its identity. The result is the identity crisis at all levels from the top to the bottom.

The strange situation of some of the Eastern Catholic Church bear witness to this sad truth. For some the universal communion seems to be a juridical association or fellowship with a monolithic pattern. For example the sad plight of the Syro-Malabar Church provides convincing evidences of this phenomenon. From 1599 upto 1896 this Church was ruled over by bishops of the Latin Church. Even after 1896 the clerical formation was exclusively under the Latins according to the Latin tradition. Thus the ancient indigenous Church of the Thomas Christians which was Indian in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship became almost a replica of the Latin Church. Some of them did not even find any difficulty in calling themselves Roman Catholic. Their theology, spirituality, discipline, liturgy, administrative system, etc followed the Latin pattern. In 1962 a Seminary was started at Vadavathoor for imparting proper ecclesial formation, according to the venerable eastern heritage of the St. Thomas Christians. But the Syro-Malabar Bishops unanimously decided to appoint a Latin priest as its rector! and requested Rome for approval! But Rome intervened and reminded them about the particular identity and goal in imparting clerical formation. Such an example is eloquent enough to prove the result of the loss of one's own ecclesial heritage and identity.

The same tension is evident in the question of restoring and promoting the identity and heritage at the liturgical, spiritual and disciplinary levels. The unique role of the Petrine ministry becomes evident in this context. It is primarily at the service of the Church for protecting and promoting their venerable patrimony. Moreover in a strange situation as that of the Syro-Malabar Church which was ruled over by Latin Bishops, the obligation of Rome is much greater. It was with the explicit knowledge of the See of Rome that the latinization of the Syro-Malabar Church took place. It was because of their respect and obedience to the Petrine See that they had to accept and obey foreign Latin bishops of the Padroado and Propaganda jurisdictions. It is because of this obedience and loyalty they are impoverished and alienated from their own venerable traditions. In such a strange situation as this Rome cannot shirk its responsibility by leaving the fate of this Church to the decisions of the Syro-Malabar bishops. It is in this context the Petrine ministry becomes useful, meaningful and relevant. With full confidence we hope that the Holy See of Rome will play its unavoidable role in safeguarding Syro-Malabar Church in her Oriental identity.

The contents of this issue of Christian Orient deals with the Mārthoma Mārgam, the Mylapore Cross and the liturgical context of the Church. These topics are important in the study of the ecclesial patrimony and identity of the Eastern Churches. The treasures of these churches have to be unearthed, understood appreciated and assessed in their proper context. These articles are some moderate attempts with that end in view. I am grateful to the authors Sr. Presenna CMC J. Kollapampil and J. Kallarangatt for their contributions in this line.

**Xavier Koodapuzha**  
Editor



# The *Tōma Marga*: Icon of the Indo-Oriental Identity of the Thomas Christians of India

## Introduction

At this critical moment of the ecclesial life of the St Thomas Christians of India<sup>1</sup> when the church exhibits her pitiful disfigured countenance, we thought of dealing with the theme of the *Tōmā Mārgā* (Law of Thomas) as was expressed in her liturgical life.<sup>1a</sup> The celebrated axiom

*Lex orandi lex credendi* is taken as the basis of the present study.<sup>2</sup>

The *Tōmā Mārgā*<sup>3</sup>, also known as the "Law of Thomas", is vast, it being constituted of the liturgy, theology, spirituality and discipline, in fact the whole identity of an individual Church. It includes the Holy *Qurbānā* (Eucharistic Liturgy), the Sacraments, the

1. The St. Thomas Christians, a single unified Church until *Padroado* jurisdiction, are today divided into a number of Churches, in communion with the Roman See or not. In the present article we use the phrase "St. Thomas Christians of India" to indicate exclusively the Church which has come to be called in recent times as "Syro-Malabar Church". Thereby we have no intention or desire to deny the Sister-Churches their character as "St. Thomas Christians of India."
- 1a. I most gratefully acknowledge the valuable suggestions and corrections given by Rev. Fr. Antony George KOLLAMPARAMPIL, Prof. Dr. Mons. Pierre YOUSIF and Prof. Dr. Dr. Edward FARRUGIA, S. J.
2. This axiom, attributed to Pope St. Celestine I, is given in its full form by Prosper of Aquitaine as follows: *ut legem credendi statuat lex supplicandi*, that the rule of prayer establishes the rule of faith. LANG, J. P., *Dictionary of the Liturgy*, (New York, 1976), 321. For a theological exposition of this axiom, see: VAGAGGINI, C., *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy*, tr. L. J. DOYLE and W. A. JURGENS, (Collegeville, 1976), 529-546.
3. The term *Mārga*, a derivation of the Pali word *maggā*, has always been used among the Thomas Christians to denote their christian way of life. THAZHATH, A., *Juridical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church*, A Historico-Juridical Study, OIRSI 106, (Kottayam, 1987) 8. [= THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*]. The Syriac equivalent to *Mārga* is 'Urha' and it means 'a way, road, journey' or 'a custom, manner of life' or 'religion, the service of God.' PAYNE SMITH, J., (MRS MARGOLIOUTH) ed., *A compendious Syriac Dictionary*, (Oxford, 1985) 8. [= PAYNE SMITH, *Syriac Dictionary*].



Liturgy of the Hours, the Liturgical Year, the Sacramentals, Social Customs, Ecclesiastical Structure, Political life, etc. Here, however, we limit ourselves to the Holy *Qurbānā*, the Sacraments, Sacramentals and particular Devotions. In this study, by no means exhaustive, we try to rediscover the liturgical uniqueness of the Thomas Christians.

For his licentiate in Sacred Liturgy, Pathikulangara has attempted to produce a dissertation on the Law of

Thomas<sup>4</sup>, limiting himself to the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Liturgy of the Hours and the Liturgical Year. Many a work of Fr. Placid J. Podipara furnishes us with materials on this topic.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the Thomas Christian Encyclopedia of India<sup>6</sup>, the works of some Thomas Christian authors are particularly useful<sup>7</sup>, while valuable information and useful suggestions are available from some European writers, missionaries and a few travellers.<sup>8</sup>

4. PATHIKULANGARA, V., *The Law of Thomas: History, Liturgy and Theology of the community of Thomas Christians*, Rome: PIL, 1974. [= PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*].
5. PLACID, *Nammude Rittu* (Our Rite), Mannanam, 1944. [= PODIPARA, *Our Rite*]; PODIPARA, P. J., *The Thomas Christians*, London-Bombay, 1970. [= PODIPARA, *Thomas Christians*]. As Fr. Placid J. Podipara is known under different names as Fr. Placid, Placidus, P. Podipara, P. J. Podipara, Placid J. Podipara, etc. we use always Podipara.
6. It is published in connection with the Jubilee Celebrations in 1972 of the Martyrdom of the Apostle of India. MENACHERY, *St. Thomas Christian Encyclopedia of India* [= STCEI].
7. BERNARD OF ST THOMAS, *Mar Tōmā Cristyanikal* (St. Thomas Christians) (Mal.), 2 vols, vol. 1, Palai, 1916, vol. 2, Mannanam, 1933, 2 Ed. in 3 vols, Kottayam, 1992. [= BERNARD OF ST THOMAS, *St. Thomas Christians*]; MUNDADAN, A. M., *Traditions of St. Thomas Christians*, Bangalore, 1970. [= MUNDADAN, *Traditions*]; KOODAPUZHA, X., *Bharata Sabha Caritram* (Indian Church History) OIRSI 38, Kottayam, 1980 [KOODAPUZHA, *Indian Church History*]; AERTHAYIL, J., *The Spiritual Heritage of the St. Thomas Christians*, Bangalore, 1982; VELLIAN, J., "An Eastern and Indianized Liturgy", *Christian Orient* 1 (1980): 7-20. [= VELLIAN, "An Eastern and Indianized Liturgy"]. The doctoral thesis of Thoompunkal does not deal with this theme as he concentrates mostly on the liturgical sources from the time of the indigenous prelates (1896 onwards). THOOMPUNKAL, J., *The Laws on Divine Worship and especially on Sacraments in the Malabar Church in their Sources*, Rome: PIOS, 1986.
8. De MONSERRATE, A., *Informacion de los christianos de S. Thome 1579 ms.* Ms Goa 33, Jesuit Archives, Rome. [= De MONSERRATE, *Informacion*]; Da SILVA REGO, A., ed., *Documentacao para a historia dos missoes do padroado português eo oriente, India*, 12 vols., Lisbon, 1947-1958 [= Da SILVA REGO, *Documentacao*]; BARBOSA, D., *An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants completed in the year 1518 AD*, 2 vols, English edition M. L. DAMES, London, 1918. [= BARBOSA, *Account of the Countries*]; BARBOSA, D., *A Description of the Coast of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the 16th Century*, London, 1866. [= BARBOSA, *Description*]; DIONYSIO, "Informação de Christandade de Sao Thomé que estam no



We try to understand the *Tōma Mārga* from a historico-descriptive point of view, with the aim of tracing out some aspects of the ecclesial life-style of the Thomas Christians. We have adopted this method owing to the lack of primary sources.<sup>9</sup> The above mentioned authors and later witnesses provide us, in large measure, with reliable historical data. Since one is to depend much on the still prevailing oral traditions and customs, the method is descriptive as well. There is no room, in this study, to enter into the theological dimensions of the *Tōma Mārga*.

### 1. 0. The *Toma Mārga*: the Way of the Thomas Christians

The *Tōma Mārga* is the very breath of life of the Thomas Christians. They called it so, as they had inherited it from their own Apostle, St. Thomas. Never opposed to the Law of Peter, it was yet never one with it.<sup>10</sup> The *Tōma Mārga*, in the words of Metropolitan Mar Joseph Powathil, is the way which is Christ; it is the sum total of the Tomistic experience of Christ as experienced and lived in the liturgical celebration and day-to-day life of the Thomas

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Malabar, Reino da India Oriental, 1578" in Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação* XII, 394-403. We refer always this documentation. The same document is also given in WICKI, *Documenta Indica* XI, 131-143. [= DIONYSIO, "Informação"]; De GOUVEA, A., *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes Primaz da India Oriental, religioso da Ordem de S. Agostinho*, Coimbra, 1606; The Acts of the Synod of Diamper (1599) were published as the 2nd vol. of the *Jornada* under the title *Synodo Diocesano da Igreja e bispado de Angamale das antigos christãos de Sam Tomé das Serras do Malavar das partes da India Oriental*, Coimbra, 1606. [= De GOUVEA, *Jornada*]; De GOES, D., *Cronica do Felicissimo Rei D. Manuel*, ed. J. M. T. De CARVALHO & D. LOPES, 4 vols. Coimbra, 1927. [= De GOES, *Cronica*]; PAULINO DA S. BARTOLOMEU, *Viaggio all'Indie orientali*, Rome, 1796. [= PAULINO, *Viaggio*]; VINCENZO MARIA, F., *Il viaggio all'Indie orientali*, Venice, 1683. [= VINCENZO MARIA, *Viaggio*]; Da SOLEDADE, F., *Historia Seraphica da Ordem dos Frades Menores de S. Francisco na Provincia de Portugal continuador da obra de rei Manuel Esperança, que apresenta este mesmo titulo 3, que e o primeiro que escreveu*, Lisbon, 1705. [= Da SOLEDADE, *Historica Seraphica*]; WICKI, J., ed., *Documenta Indica*, 15 vols, Rome, 1948. [= WICKI, *Documenta Indica*]; RAULIN, F., *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae cum Diamperitana synodo*, Rome, 1745. [= RAULIN, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae*].

9. PLACID, "The South Indian Apostolate of St. Thomas", *OCP* 18 (1952): 234. [= PODIPARA, "Apostolate of St. Thomas"]; PODIPARA, P. J., *The Canonical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church*, ed. X. KOODAPUZHA, OIRSI 104, (Kottayam, 1986), 54. [= PODIPARA, *Canonical Sources*]. It is largely because of the burning of the liturgical texts after Diamper (1599) as well as the three centuries (1599-1896) of whole-scale latinisation by the Portuguese.
10. The Synod of Diamper condemned the so-called 'heresy' that the Law of St. Thomas is one, and that of St. Peter another which made two different churches both immediately from Christ. Cf. GEDDES, M., trans., *The History of the Church of Malabar from the Time of its being first discovered by the Portuguesees in the year 1501*. Giving an Account of the Persecutions and violent methods of the Roman Prelates to reduce them to the Subjection



Christians.<sup>11</sup> For Pathikulangara, it was the *complexus* of the Rite of the Thomas Christians; the sum total of their liturgical, ascetical, ecclesiastical, social and political life.<sup>12</sup> Fr. Podipara defines the *Toma Marga* most succinctly with the famous axiom: "Hindu in Culture, Christian in Religion and Oriental in Worship"<sup>13</sup>. In short, it

was the christian life fully Oriental and fully Indian, more precisely still Malabarian.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.0 Liturgy of the Thomas Christians

From time immemorial the Thomas Christians used the East Syrian Liturgy.<sup>15</sup> They adapted the East

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of the Church of Rome; Together with the Synod of Diamper celebrated in the year of our Lord 1599; with some Remarks upon the Faith and Doctrine of the Christians of St. Thomas in the Indies agreeing with the Church of England in Opposition with that of Rome, (London, 1694), 142-143. [= GEDDES, *History of the Church of Malabar*]. The juridical invalidity of this 'Synod' is proved by THALIATH, J., *The Synod of Diamper*, OCA 152, Rome, 1958.

11. POWATHIL, J., Syro-Malabar Sabhayude Vekthithwam Aradhanayil (Individuality of the Syro-Malabar Church and Liturgy) *Mar Thoma Vidya Nikethan News Letter* 1 (1993): 13-14. [= POWATHIL, "Individuality of the Syro-Malabar Church"].
12. PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 4; PERUMTHOTTAM, J., *Arādhana-kramanavikaranam Syro-Malabar Sabhayil* (Liturgical Renewal in the Syro-Malabar Church) (Changanacherry, 1992), 6.
13. PLACIDUS, "Hindu in Culture, Christian in Religion, Oriental in Worship" *OKSI* 8 (1959): 89. [= PODIPARA, "Hindu in Culture"]; PODIPARA, P. "The social and socio-ecclesiastical Customs of the Syrian Christians of India", *ECQ* 7 (1947): 222-236; PODIPARA, *Thomas Christians*, 79-100. This axiomatic statement is conceded also by an author who tends to be critical of Fr. Podipara: "As a descriptive statement, this well known formula does contain some truth: the Syro-Malabar Church is Indian in culture to some extent, chiefly as regards certain social customs. But its inculturation does not go far enough..." NEDUNGATT, G., "Spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church", in A. THOTTAKARA, *East Syrian Spirituality*, (Bangalore, 1990), 201. The question of in-depth inculturation of the Indian non-Christian religious systems and mentalities or the "evangelization of cultures" is a complex one and, indeed, many factors have to be borne in mind. No Church exclusively identifies with a culture and, besides, India itself notoriously abounds in religious cultures. The point of departure must in any case be a grasp of the Church's own identity, for only in this way can proper discernment and legitimate integration of values take place. This is an on-going process, since cultures continuously evolve and enrich themselves, without ever achieving perfection.
14. PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 4.
15. PAREMAKKAL, T., *The Varthamanapustakam*, Rendered into English with an Introduction and Notes by P. J. PODIPARA, OCA 190, (Rome, 1971), 2. [= PAREMAKKAL, *Varthamanapustakam*,]; PODIPARA, *Thomas Christians*, 86. For a history of the Liturgy of the Thomas Christians, see: ARAYATHINAL, T., "Vicissitudes of the East Syrian Liturgy in Malabar,



Syrian Liturgy to their surroundings and to the Hindu culture, christianising the customs and practices of the high caste Hindus from among whom, according to tradition, their nucleus was formed by the Apostle<sup>16</sup>. Syriac, in the Eastern dialectic form, was their liturgical language<sup>17</sup>.

## 2.1 Sacraments

Due to the lack of original sources, we can gain some idea of the sacraments of the Thomas Christians only by piecing together some of the available shreds of evidence.

### 2.1.1 Sacraments of Initiation

#### 2.1.1.1 Baptism

It was administered according to the Chaldean rite<sup>18</sup>. In the baptistry of certain churches the baptismal

formula was seen written on the wall. These words were very similar to those of the baptismal form of the Greeks<sup>19</sup>. The names given at baptism were mostly scriptural. The paternal grandfather's (or grandmother's) name was given respectively to the first male (or female) child. The second child acquired the name of the maternal grandfather or grandmother. Christian names received modifications according to Malabar taste<sup>20</sup>. Decree 16 of Diamper forbade the custom of giving the name of Jesus (*Iṣōc*) at baptism<sup>21</sup>.

The infant was baptised only forty days after its birth, unless in danger of death. Louis Cadamust (who visited Malabar in 1493) says that those who were in Calicut were baptised in a river<sup>22</sup>. Adult baptisms were not unheard of. M. Carneiro says that he baptised many sons of Thomas Christians, all of whom received baptism with an oath of obedience to the

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India", in *Symposium Syriacum*, OCA 197, (Rome, 1974), 413-438; VELLIAN, J., *Aradhanakramam Nuttandukalilude* (Liturgy: Down through the Centuries) Kottayam, 1967.

16. PAREMAKKAL, *Varthamanapustakam*, 2.
17. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 17; PODIPARA, P. J., *The Rise and Decline of the Indian Church of the Thomas Christians*, OIRSI 31, (Kottayam, 1979) 8. [= PODIPARA, *Rise and Decline*]; HILARION, J., "The Sacraments of the Malabar Church before 1400 A. D." in STCEI, I, 115. [HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church"].
18. MUNDADAN, A. M., *The Arrival of the Portuguese in India and the Thomas Christians under Mar Jacob (1498-1552)*, (Bangalore, 1967), 75. [=MUNDADAN, *Arrival*]. For a theological discussion on the Rite of Baptism, KARIAPURAM, J., *The East Syrian Baptism - A Textual Study*, Rome: PIOS, 1971; ALENCHERRY, G., *Le baptême de Jésus dans l'Oeuvre de Luc et dans la tradition baptismale de l'Eglise Indo-chaldéenne*, Sorbonne, 1986.
19. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 35-36; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 115.
20. PODIPARA, "Hindu in Culture", 100.
21. TISSERANT, E., *Eastern Christianity in India, A History of the Syro-Malabar Church from the Earliest Time to the Present Day*, Authorised Adaptation from the French by E. R. HAMBYE, (Calcutta, 1957), 167. [= TISSERANT, *Eastern Christianity*].
22. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 35-36; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 115. The primary source does not occur in either.



Roman Church<sup>23</sup>. According to Dionysio there were many unbaptized adults. It was so because the *cathanars* could not baptise; only the bishops could administer baptism.<sup>24</sup> But Raulin says that owing to the scarcity of priests, baptism was administered only once a year<sup>25</sup>. The mother of the male child entered the church forty days after delivery, and if the child was female only after eighty days. Children of those who were under excommunication were not given baptism<sup>26</sup>.

### 2. 1. 1. 2 Confirmation

The 'Sacrament of Confirmation' was given with baptism without any special anointing, in accordance with the tradition of Ctesiphon (Antioch and Selucia) until the 7th century<sup>27</sup>. Hence the Syriac name '*Rāzā*' *dašumlāyā*,

(Sacrament of fulfilment). The infant would be anointed during baptism. The most important part of this sacrament was the imposition of hands, together with the prescribed prayers. Some scholars such as Tisserant are of the opinion that coconut oil was used for the baptismal function. Clearly, they doubted even the existence of this sacrament in Malabar Church<sup>28</sup>.

### 2. 1. 1. 3 Holy Qurbana

The Eucharistic celebration was held with great solemnity<sup>29</sup>. They shared the East Syrian Divine Liturgy from very ancient times with the Chaldeans. All the three anaphoras of the same Church were in use, although for the anaphoras of Theodore and Nestorius we have less evidence than that of Addai and Mari<sup>30</sup>.

23. CARNEIRO, M., "Ludovico Gonçalves da Camāra S. I., Ulyssiponem, Goa 24 Decembris, 1557", in WICKI, *Documenta Indica* III, 798-799; MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 168-172; THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 52.
24. DIONYSIO, "Informação", 400, 402; MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 169.
25. RAULIN, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae*, 385. Fr Podipara speaks of "once in three years at Calicut". PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 36.
26. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 36.
27. TISSERANT, *Eastern Christianity*, 166. For a discussion on confirmation in the East Syrian Liturgy, RAES, A., "Où se trouve la confirmation dans le rite syro-orientale?", *OrSyr* 1 (1956): 239-254.
28. TISSERANT, *Eastern Christianity*, 166, THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 53; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 115.
29. For a theological commentary on the Holy Qurbānā', see: YOUSIF, P., "The Divine Liturgy according to the Rite of the Assyro-Chaldean Church", in *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East*, ed. J. MADEY, Kottayam-Paderborn, 1983, 173-237; PATHIKULANGARA, V. & VELLIAN, J., "The Eucharistic Liturgy of the Chaldeo-Indian Church", in *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East*, ed. J. MADEY, Kottayam-Paderborn, 1983, 239-272; CHITTILAPILLY, J., *Mdabbranuta. The Divine Dispensation of Our Lord in the Holy Qurbana of East Syrian Tradition*, Rome: PIOS, 1990.
30. According to Raulin this Qurbana is the best of all other Eucharistic celebrations. Any one attentively going through it will be convinced that all its important parts are related to the time of the Apostles. RAULIN, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae*, 289-290; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 115.



### 2.1.1.3.1 Frequency of the Celebration

According to Mateus Dias the bishops from Babylon ordained many without giving them permission to celebrate *Qurbana*<sup>31</sup>. According to Dionysio the main duty of the *Kathanars* was to recite the Divine Office in choir and that they did not baptise or celebrate *Qurbana*<sup>32</sup>. Hence, the evidence seems rather against the frequent celebration of *Qurbana*.

### 2.1.1.3.2 The Vestments and Ministers

Liturgical dress consisted of a cope or a large piece of cloth in the form of an amice, and over it a stole, which they called *orario*<sup>33</sup>. *Qurbana* was celebrated with two ministers, preferably deacons. De Monserrate, however, mentions the permission given by Mar Joseph to the lay faithful to

assist at the *Qurbana*<sup>34</sup>. The *Qurbana* was always celebrated on the altar at the eastern side of the church with a cross facing the celebrant<sup>35</sup>.

### 2.1.1.3.3. The Eucharistic Bread and Wine

Bread used in the *Qurbana* was leavened<sup>36</sup>. Penteado tells us that it was wheat bread mixed with salt and olive oil<sup>37</sup>. In 1561 Barreto wrote that the priests consecrated fermented bread mixed with a certain oil which they believed was consecrated by Our Lord<sup>38</sup>.

De Monserrate testifies that there was a ball-shaped lump in the middle of the Eucharistic bread made out of rice flour, which the priest consumed at the communion, the rest of the bread being given to the faithful<sup>39</sup>. The bread was baked by the deacons.

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31. Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação*, IV, 477-478; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 22-23.
  32. Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação* XII, 400; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 22-23.
  33. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion*, 33, f. 149 as quoted by PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 23.
  34. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion*, 33, f. 149 as quoted by PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 23.
  35. Most of the crosses were made after the 'Mylapore Cross'. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 39.
  36. Fr. Podipara writes with a meaningful question mark in brackets: ("if leavened bread is not available unleavened can be used"). PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 34.
  37. Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação*, III, 548; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 23.
  38. BARRETO, M. N., "Visitatio episcopalis oppidi coculani et christianorum S. Thomae" in WICKI, *Documenta Indica* V, 417. [= BARRETO, "Visitatio episcopalis"]; About the *fermentum sacrum* of Chaldeans, see: HANSSSENS, J. M., *Institutiones Liturgicae de ritibus Orientalibus* II/1, (Rome, 1930), 169-174.
  39. De MONSERRATE, A., "De sacrificio missae. De titulo Matris Dei et sanctae Virginis" in WICKI, *Documenta Indica* XI, 517; VELLIAN, "An Eastern and Indianized Liturgy", 17; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 115. De Monserrate was of the opinion that even if the ball is of wheat flour an intolerable error is committed because the people think that they are receiving communion. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion* 33, f. 149 as quoted by PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 24.



They used to recite psalms while baking the bread. This bread was brought to the celebrant on a fresh leaf, preferably a lotus leaf<sup>40</sup>.

With regard to the wine used, all agree with Fr. Podipara, as he says without the slightest doubt, (being at the same time fully aware of the different idea expressed by Da Soledade<sup>41</sup>) that the Eucharistic wine was prepared from dry grapes or raisins<sup>42</sup>. Since India does not grow wine, the Christians had to make use of the raisins for the Eucharist<sup>43</sup>. Almost two centuries after De Monserrate, we have the description of Malabar *Qurbana* by Paulinos of Bertholomeo (1796). Accordingly the wine used in Malabar was made from the coconut sap called *Thagaram*<sup>44</sup>. Vellian draws our attention to the question of adaptation here. "In the absence of vineyards in India this looks like a typical adaptation.

One may also note that Malabar does not grow wheat. Hence the use of rice flour is also understandable"<sup>45</sup>.

## 2. 1. 1. 3. 4. The Incense

The liturgy was never celebrated without incense. Apart from the inner and outer part of the chalice and all the other things used for the *Qurbana*, they used to incense the sanctuary and also the people assembled during the *Qurbana*. During the incensation, the people used to perform certain waving motions with their hands in order to make the smoke come to them<sup>46</sup>.

## 2. 1. 1. 3. 5. Some other Particulars

Whenever the celebrant turned to the people during the *Qurbana* they said: *Slāmā' camkōn* (Peace be with you)<sup>47</sup>. There was a homily after the Gospel. The creed used in the *Qurbana*

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40. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 34-35; PODIPARA, P., "Thomas Christians and their Adaptation" *ECR* 3 (1970): 174.
  41. He speaks of the 'abominable error' of consecrating rice cakes and wine of palm as the matter of the Holy *Qurbana*. Da SOLEDADE, *Historia Seraphica*, 916; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 115.
  42. Perhaps the Europeans had mistaken the *nērcā appam* (the votive offering of rice bread and coconut juice distributed among the devotees) for the bread and wine used in the Holy *Qurbana*. HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 115.
  43. They used raisins brought from Mekkah and Ormus, according to Barbosa. BARBOSA, *Description*, 162-163 as quoted by VELLIAN, "Eastern and Indianised Liturgy", 17. De Monserrate says that owing to the large quantity of water used in the process of making wine, the consecration was invalid. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion*, f. 149; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 24.
  44. According to Pathikulangara, the 'wine of palm' in this context must be the cocomilk, the sweet liquid inside the coconut. Even today it is considered 'lustral' and as an object which their Hindu bretheren use to placate the deity. Thus it has acquired a further sacred character. PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 28.
  45. VELLIAN, "An Eastern and Indianised Liturgy", 17-18.
  46. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion*, f. 149. According to Dionysio, the second stage in the punishment of a priest was to deny him incense during the Divine services. Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação* XII, 402, PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 25; see also MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 166.
  47. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion*, f. 149.



was Nicean<sup>48</sup>. There was only a single elevation; the chalice was not elevated. At the elevation, all the faithful bent their heads down to the floor saying that they were not worthy of seeing it<sup>49</sup>. As regards the breaking of the bread, Penteado says that it was divided into many parts, whereas De Monserrate is of the opinion that the host was broken into two, one half of which was dipped into the Blood and then used to wet the other portion in several places<sup>50</sup>. Here he might be speaking of the Rite of Consignation, but the Thomas Christians sign only once with the part wetted in the Blood.

### 2. 1. 1. 3. 6. Communion

The communion of the faithful was under both species<sup>51</sup>. With great

devotion the faithful received Holy Communion, the priest placing it on the right palm of the recipient who places it in his own mouth and then communicates the Blood applying his mouth to the rim of the chalice<sup>52</sup>. Barbosa says that they consecrate bread sufficient for all who are present in the Church and distribute the whole of it<sup>53</sup>. This is clear proof that the Thomas Christians never preserved the Blessed Sacrament except for the *viaticum*<sup>54</sup>.

According to De Monserrate, the *Qurbana* ended with a Gospel read by the celebrant facing the people<sup>55</sup>. He might be speaking here of the *hullāmā*, the final blessing over the people which contains many biblical citations<sup>56</sup>.

48. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion*, f. 149.

49. Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação*, III, 359; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 25.

50. Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação*, III, 359; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 25.

51. One may now wonder as he listens to Carneiro when he says: "for they have this error, that all communicate under both species...". CARNEIRO, M., "Cur non bene uniuntur cum catholicis: De eucharistia mira narrantur" in WICKI, *Documenta Indica* III, 805. [= CARNEIRO, "De eucharistia mira narrantur"]; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 26. We have documents up to 1581 showing communion in both the species. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 71.

52. For a detailed description of the communion, Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação* III, 548; MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 167; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 25-26.

53. BARBOSA, *Account of the Countries*, 2, 101; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 26.

54. The *Taksa' dQudāšā'* of 1986 says: "When the faithful have received communion, the celebrant replaces the paten and chalice in their places. After bowing he consumes what is left over...". *Order for the Solemn Raza of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Trivandrum, 1986, 64.

55. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion* f. 149 as quoted by PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 26.

56. MUNDADAN, *Traditions* 167; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 26.



## 2. 1. 2. Other Sacraments

### 2. 1. 2. 1. Holy Orders

Early Syriac documents testify that India and all its parts and those around it had received priesthood from Judas Thomas<sup>57</sup>. The candidate for priesthood was presented to the Bishop by the community of the parishioners called *palliyōgam* from whom he had to get a letter patent called *deśakury* which was to be maintained by the parish<sup>58</sup>. Priests were ordained for the parish and not for the diocese<sup>59</sup>.

Priests were called *kathanars*, of whom those who gave formation and

instruction to the clerics were called *malpāns*. Even at the age of 17 or 18 clerics were ordained priests<sup>60</sup>. They used to wear white dress consisting of long loose trousers and a loose gown with wide sleeves and a sailor's collar<sup>61</sup>. They were often married<sup>62</sup>. The ministry of the Archdeacon was a constant element at all hours of service and ecclesiastical assemblies<sup>63</sup>.

### 2. 1. 2. 2. Matrimony

Marriage was an elaborate ceremony among the Thomas Christians and numerous rites had to be performed to the accompaniment of songs and dances<sup>64</sup>. It should be noted that in

57. PODIPARA, "Apostolate of St. Thomas", 241; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 116. For a theological study on the Holy Orders: ALENCHERRY, I., *Priesthood in the Chaldean Church: A Study based on the Rite of Priestly Ordination*, Rome: Gregorian University, 1965; VALIAMATTAM, G., *Episcopacy: A Theological Study of Consecration according to the Chaldean Rite*, Rome: Gregorian University, 1967.
58. *The desakury* was tantamount to the patrimony of modern times. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 37.
59. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 37; see also KOODAPUZHA, *Indian Church History*, 278
60. The canonical age for ordination was fixed "that none be ordained priest till they are five and twenty" by the Synod of Diamper, Session VII, *De sacramento ordinis*, decree 1. GEDDES, *History of the Church of Malabar*, 291; RAULIN, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae*, 179-182; TISSERANT, *Eastern Christianity*, 168.
61. This dress is still worn by the Jacobite and Orthodox priests of Malabar. HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 116.
62. The wife of the *kathanar* was called *kathanarthi* and enjoyed special honour in the Church. She wore a cross made of gold or some other metal around the neck. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 37.
63. KOLLAPARAMBIL, J., *The Archdeacon of all India*, (Kottayam, 1972), 79-81.
64. THOMAS, P. J., *The marriage Customs and Songs of the Christians of Malabar*, (Madras, 1936), 1. [= THOMAS, *Marriage Customs*]. For a theological discussion on Matrimony, YOUSIF, P., "La celebration du mariage dans le rite chaldeen", in *La celebrazione cristiana del matrimonio: simboli e gesti* ed. G. FARNEDI, SA 93, AL 11, Rome, 1986, 217-259; TELLINI, G., *Il Taksa dKullala secondo il rito matrimoniale caldeo: una interpretazione liturgico-teologica*, Rome: PIOS, 1965; THATTIL, J., *Proposal for a Reformed Rite of Matrimony for the Syro-Malabar Church*, Rome: PIOS, 1971. [= THATTIL, *Reformed Rite of Matrimony*; EDAKALATHUR, L., *The Theology of Marriage in the East Syrian Tradition*, UDD, Rome: PIOS, 1993. [= EDAKALATHUR, *Theology of Marriage*].



the matrimonial traditions of the Thomas Christians most of the native elements were social in character while the East Syrian elements were mostly liturgical<sup>65</sup>. But no wedding ring was used, even though prescribed in the East Syrian Rite; it might be that, as Fr. Podipara observes, the *tāli* has taken the place of rings<sup>66</sup>. Some of these marriage customs are preserved even today.

## 2. 1. 2. 2. 1 Engagement and other Arrangements

Child marriage was rather common among the Thomas Christians<sup>67</sup>. Marriages were generally arranged. For engagement the parents or guardians of the future husband and wife had to hold the hands of each other in the presence of the priest<sup>68</sup>. According to Pullapilly, until recently the betrothal agreement was signed under the sanctuary lamp<sup>69</sup>.

Unlike the Chaldeans, Thomas Christians followed the Brahmin custom of dowry, given by the party of the bride to the bridegroom<sup>70</sup>. It was given in cash and gold on the day of engagement at the house of the bride. A certain percentage (generally 10%) of the dowry—which was called *pasāram*—went to the parish church of the bride<sup>71</sup>. After the exchange of the dowry contract marriage consent was given by the parties.

## 2. 1. 2. 2. 2 Marriage Day Preparations

Marriage usually took place on Sundays, but the ceremonial celebrations lasted for four days. *Kalamezhulu* (designs made by sprinkling rice flour inside the pavilion erected in front of the house), *Alamcārtū* (the ceremonial dressing of the bridegroom's hair), ceremonial bath, *maylānciyidal* (anointing the feet of the bride with *mayilānci*), *madhuramkotukkal* (feeding the bride and groom with sweets) etc.

65. THATTIL, *Reformed Rite of Matrimony*, 103–108.

66. PODIPARA, *Thomas Christians*, 90.

67. PODIPARA, "Hindu in Culture" 101; THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources* 55. THATTIL, *Reformed Rites of Matrimony*, 105. The Synod of Diamper fixed the marriageable age as 14 for boys and 12 for girls. Actio VII, Matr' Decr. 10. PAYNGOT, C., "The Syro-Malabar Marriage" in *La celebrazione cristiana del matrimonio: simboli e gesti*, ed. G. FARNEDI; SA 93, AL 11: (Rome, 1986), 269. [= PAYNGOT, "Syro-Malabar Marriage"].

68. According to Payngot, if the partners were children there was no betrothal. It was Leonard Mellano, the Vicar Apostolic, who prescribed that the partners should express their consent before the parish priest of the girl. PAYNGOT, "Syro-Malabar Marriage", 270.

69. PULLAPILLY, C., "Hindu Symbolisms in the Syro-Malabar Liturgy and Devotions", *One Church* 25 (1971): 124. [= PULLAPILLY, "Hindu Symbolisms"]. 124.

70. For more details, PAYNGOT, "Syro-Malabar Marriage", 270–271.

71. Synod of Diamper (decree 14) recommended that everyone should adopt this custom of *pasāram*, which was proper only to some parts of the diocese of Angamale. TISSERANT, *Eastern Christianity*, 164.



are typical examples. Songs commemorating the origin and privileges of the Christians were sung during all these celebrations<sup>72</sup>.

### 2. 1. 2. 2. 3 Church Functions

The blessing of the marriage was not during the Holy *Qurbana*<sup>73</sup>. The blessing of a chalice with wine mixed with water, however, belonged to the marriage ceremony. A cross was lowered into it and the husband and wife directed to drink from it<sup>74</sup>.

### 2. 1. 2. 2. 4 The Minnu and Mantrakodi

The most important function within the marriage was the tying of the *lālī*<sup>75</sup> or *minnu*, (a cross of 21 minute beads around) the neck of the bride by the bridegroom, the thread of which is drawn out from the *mantrakodi*, the bridal veil. *Minnu*, the exact counterpart of the *lālī* in Brahmin marriage ceremony, is a clear example of intelligent adaptation by the Thomas

Christians from the remotest past<sup>76</sup>. After tying the *minnu*, the priest (or in some places the bridegroom) puts the *mantrakodi* over the head of the bride, a symbolic gesture announcing husband's commitment to take care of her<sup>77</sup>.

### 2. 1. 2. 2. 5. Celebrations at Home

After the ceremonies in the church the bride and the groom were taken home in grand procession. On such occasions the Thomas Christians made use of their high privileges<sup>78</sup>. Then, as now, the couple were welcomed with the sprinkling of *nellum nirum* (a fertility-cum-coronation rite) and took special care to enter the house with their right foot. At their enthronement they would be offered sweets (*Madhuramkotukal*). As the whole party enjoyed chewing *pan* the *Viratiyān* (or *Pānan*) would come in singing the privileges of the Thomas Christians<sup>79</sup>. At the culmination of the

72. THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 55.

73. For a brief description of the liturgical ceremonies of marriage, cf. EDAKALATHUR, *Theology of Marriage*, 138-189.

74. PAYNGOT, "Syro-Malabar Marriage", 263.

75. PODIPARA, "Hindu in Culture", 101; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 116. In those places where priestly service was not available what was of sole importance was the tying of the *lālī*. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 38. The usual Malayalam idiom referring to marriage is derived from the verb 'to tie' PAYNGOT, "Syro-Malabar Marriage", 267.

76. PAYNGOT, "Syro Malabar Marriage", 266.

77. This cloth used to be carefully preserved to be worn for holy communion and was to serve finally as her shroud at burial. Women are to wear the *minnu* as long as the husband lives. After her death it is either buried with her or given to the treasury of the church. THATTIL, *Reformed Rite of Matrimony*, 112-113; PAYNGOT, "Syro Malabar Marriage", 267.

78. In accordance with Iravi Korttan's copper-plate grant, the Thomas Christians enjoyed many privileges. AYYAR, R. B. L. K. A., *Anthropology of the Syrian Christians*, (Ernakulam, 1926), 52. THOMAS, *Marriage Customs*, 42-43; THATTIL, *Reformed Rite of Matrimony*, 118.

79. For a brief description of *Viratiyān* or *Pānan* songs, cf. KOODAPUZHA, *Indian Church History*, 93.



wedding ceremony, the couple would go three times round a lamp, the elders joyously blessing them. Dances such as *Mārgamkali*, *Attam*, *Vattamkali* were also performed during the festivities of the following days<sup>80</sup>.

Although marriage was often conducted before the age of puberty, marital life could be started only after they were sufficiently grown up. Even though they lived in the midst of non-Christians, divorce as such was unheard of among them<sup>81</sup>. Widows would not re-marry until after a period of mourning for one year<sup>82</sup>.

### 2. 1. 2. 3 Sacrament of Penance

According to Mafe and Joseph the Indian, it was customary with the Syro-Malabarians to make confession of their sins before they received Holy Communion<sup>83</sup>. Fr. Bernard of St. Thomas strongly denies the

accusation of the Diamper synod that this sacrament was never administered among the Thomas Christians<sup>84</sup>. Both private and public confession were in practice, although private confession had not much developed. Joseph the Indian says that they had the Sacraments, both of Confession and Communion<sup>85</sup>.

In keeping with the descriptive account of sacramental practice in the ancient Church of Malabar furnished by the copyist of a Syriac manuscript written by Ramban Ouseph Qṣnaya in 1613, all the faithful had to go to Confession during the lenten periods, before Christmas and Easter. Public sinners were incurred a penalty which was remitted by the Assembly of the parishioners, headed by *kathanars* (priests)<sup>86</sup>. If the penitent had fallen into excommunication or any other ecclesiastical censure the priest first absolved him from it and then the

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80. With regard to the East Syrian Rite of 'shutting and opening the bridal chamber', PODIPARA, *Thomas Christians*, 90-91.
  81. De Goes says: ... in the matters of matrimony, in no case there be separation between them, except at the death of the man or wife". De GOES, *Cronica*, I, 125; MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 175.
  82. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 38; PODIPARA, *Thomas Christians*, 91; HILARION' "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 117; THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 56-57.
  83. PAULINO, *Viaggio*, 137; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 116. For a theological study, ANIKUZHİKATTIL, M., *Liturgy and the Rite of Reconciliation among the St Thomas Christians of India: A Study in Relation to other Ecclesial and Liturgical Traditions*, Leuven, 1989; ANIKUZHİKATTIL, "The Liturgical Rites of Reconciliation among the St Thomas Christians of India", *QL* 70 (1989): 251-263; ISAAC, J., *Taksa dHussaya: Le rite du Pardon dans l'Eglise Syriacque Orientale*, OCA 233, Rome, 1989.
  84. BERNARD OF ST THOMAS, *St Thomas Christians*, 364.
  85. VALLAVANTHARA, A., ed. *India in 1500 AD: The Narratives of Joseph the Indian*, (Mannanam, 1984), 98; PODIPARA, "Hindu in Culture", 100. See also PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 36; THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 54; MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 172-173.
  86. Even now centuries after, the ordinary faithful prefer to go to Confession before they receive Holy Communion. Yet an ill-informed reader of the decrees of the Synod of Diamper may doubt whether the practice of this sacrament existed among them at all!



penitent confessed the sins. Finally, the priest would hold his hand over the head of the penitent, saying: Our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God absolves you from your sins<sup>87</sup>.

#### 2. 1. 2. 4 Anointing the Sick

The accounts of Joseph the Indian and of De Goes are identical in claiming that Christians had no Extreme Unction; instead the sick were the priest<sup>88</sup>. Priests blessed by them, read the gospel over them and placed upon their bodies verses from the Holy Bible written on palm leaf or paper<sup>89</sup>. This practice was prohibited by canon 249 of Diamper<sup>90</sup>. But one has to think whether this practice has some similarity to a similar Jewish custom. According to Fr. Bernard of St. Thomas, the profession of faith made by Mar Abraham in 1577 before Pope

Gregory XIII provides ample proof that this sacrament was administered among the Thomas Christians<sup>91</sup>.

### 2. 2 Sacramentals and Liturgical Prayers

We will now speak of a few sacramentals and the Liturgical Prayers. They are the rites and prayers that reflect the special liturgical spirituality of each individual church<sup>92</sup>. Therefore we include the Liturgy of the Hours, Liturgical Year, Great Week Celebrations, the Feasts, the Fasts, the Offerings, Funeral Services, etc.

#### 2. 2. 1 The Liturgy of the Hours

While speaking about the Chaldean Bishops, Barbosa says that they recited their prayers perpetually<sup>93</sup>. Dionysio testifies that though there were only one or two or three priests in certain churches, they recited the Divine

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87. ASSEMANUS, J. S., *Biblioteca Orientalis, Clemente-Vaticana*, 3 vols., (Rome, 1719-1728, reprint, Hildesheim-New York, 1975), III/2, 206; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 116.
  88. Marco Polo was a witness to this in India in 1293. See MEDLYCOTT, A. E., *India and the Apostle St. Thomas*, (London, 1905), 84-87; PODIPARA, "Hindu in Culture", 100; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 116.
  89. According to Podipara and Hilarion, this may be an imitation of the Hindu practice of wearing on the body palm leaf on which some spirit-invoking prayer (*mantram*) has been written. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 36-37; HILARION, "Sacraments of Malabar Church", 116.
  90. FERROLI, D., *Jesuits in Malabar*, (Bangalore, 1939) 418-419; VELLIAN, "An Eastern and indianised Liturgy", 16.
  91. BERNARD OF ST. THOMAS, *St. Thomas Christians*, 364-365. Patriarch Abdišo<sup>c</sup> nominated Mar Abraham "superior to all bishops and Metropolitans" and gave him the title 'Metropolitan and Gate of all India' on August 29, 1567. PODIPARA, P. J., *The Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church*, (Alleppey, 1976), 71.
  92. The present day Syro-Malabar Church has failed miserably in this regard except for the rites and ceremonies for the departed which are strictly according to the spirit and genius of this Church. PATHIKULANGARA, V, *Resurrection, Life and Renewal: A theological Study of the Liturgical Celebrations of the Great Saturday and the Sunday of Resurrection in the Chaldeo-Indian Church*, (Bangalore-Kottayam), 15.
  93. BARBOSA, *Account of the Countries*, II 101, MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 161.



Office publicly in the church<sup>94</sup>. Barretto says that the laity used to recite the Divine Office along with the clergy both in the evening and in the morning<sup>95</sup>. De Monserrate writes that "the Malabar clergy did not consider the recitation of the Hours as obligatory except in choir or in conjunction with it"<sup>96</sup>. Vincenzo Maria affirms that all recited the Divine Office in common as soon as they were old enough to do so<sup>97</sup>.

## 2. 2. 2 Liturgical Year

Thomas Christians have, as part of the East Syrian tradition, an elaborate and beautiful arrangement of the Liturgical Year<sup>98</sup>, which is divided into nine Seasons, as follows: Annunciation-Nativity, Epiphany, Great Fast, Resurrection, Apostles, Summer, Elias-Cross, Moses and Consecration of the Church.

This is the only Christian liturgy where the cycle of the Liturgical Year begins with the period of Annunciation. Patriarch Išōc Yahb III (647-657) made the arrangement in such a way that it opens with divine providence manifested through the advent of the Saviour and closes with the crowning act of perpetual union of the Church with her Lord.<sup>99</sup>

### 2.2.2.1 Great Week Celebration

Great Week was observed in a special way by keeping vigils, spending long hours in prayer and giving alms. On Paschal Thursday evening, the father of the family would break and distribute among the members unleavened bread marked with the sign of the cross together with a sweet drink, made of coconut milk and sugar. On Passion Friday, the floor of the house and courtyard would be left unswept as a sign of sorrow. After the liturgical services of the day all - including children - would take a bitter drink made from bitter leaves. From Paschal Thursday night till Great Saturday, complete silence was observed and many would keep a complete fast. The Sunday of Resurrection was celebrated with the greatest solemnity<sup>100</sup>.

### 2.2.2.2 The Feasts

Thomas Christians generally followed the East Syrian calendar with regard to feasts - adapted, modelled and updated to meet local needs and traditions<sup>101</sup>. Besides Sundays: the Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost and Transfiguration were celebrated as feasts of Our Lord.

94. DA SILVA REGO, *Documentação* XII, 309-405; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 49.
95. BARRETO, "Visitatio episcopalis" in WICKI, *Documenta Indica* V, 416-418; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 49.
96. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion*, ff. 149-151 as quoted by MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 161.
97. VINCENZO MARIA, *Viaggio*, 146; PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 50.
98. For details PATHIKULANGARA, V., "The Liturgical Year of the Syro-Malabar Rite", *EL* 90 (1976): 173-196. MOOLAN, J., *Subāra Yaldā : The Period of Annunciation-Nativity in the East Syrian Calendar, Its Background and Place in the Liturgical Year*, OIRSI 90, (Kottayam, 1985), 11-56.
99. For details, PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 56-87.
100. PODIPARA, "Hindu in Culture", 102; THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources* 60.
101. THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 59; for a study on this theme NEELANKAVIL, J. P., *The Feast Discipline of the Thomas Christians of Malabar*, Rome: PUL, 1968.



The important feasts in honour of our Lady were her Nativity and Assumption. Commemoration of the holy apostles was made during the liturgical seasons from the Nativity of our Lord till the Great Fast. Four feasts were kept in honour of St Thomas the Apostle: The New Sunday (first Sunday after Easter), July 3 (*Dukrāna*'), December 18. (The bleeding of the Cross) and November 21 (Arrival of St. Thomas on the Malabar coast)<sup>102</sup>. The remaining feasts included Paschal Thursday, all Apostles, Finding of the Cross, St John Baptist, SS Peter and Paul, St George, St Cyriac, St Hormidz and SS Sapor and Proth.

### 2.2.2.3. The Fasts

The Thomas Christians had a rigorous discipline with regard to fasts and abstinence, an asceticism centred

around the Liturgy<sup>103</sup>. The Sixteenth-century visitors to India, witnessing this practice of fast and abstinence clearly show that it is very ancient<sup>104</sup>. Besides the fasts associated with Advent, Great Fast and Fridays, they practised others also, such as the 14 day fast before the Assumption of our Lady and the three day fast of the Ninevites<sup>105</sup>. Food would be taken only once during the fasts of Advent and Lent<sup>106</sup>. According to Joseph the Indian, the Indian Christians of Cranganore abstained from all food from Passion Friday until the Sunday of Resurrection<sup>107</sup>. Women, especially, observed seven days' fast in honour of our Lady from the first of September. They remained in the church during the fast. Dionysio testifies that the fast of Great Lent, those of the Vigils of Christmas, Pentecost, Ascension, Assumption of Our Lady, St Hormidz etc. were obligatory<sup>108</sup>.

102. Neelankavil affirms the existence of only three feasts. NEELANKAVIL, J., "Feasts of the Thomas Christians" in STCEI, I, 113. Podipara speaks of four feasts in honour of the Apostle. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 41.
103. For an account of the life of penance among the Thomas Christians, see: AERTHAYIL, *Spiritual Heritage*, 156-172; THURUTHIMATTAM, P., *Fasting Discipline of the Malabar Church*, UDD, Rome: PUL, 1965.
104. See CAREIRO M., "De eucharistia mira narrantur" in WICKI, *Documenta Indica* III, 802-805; PULLAPILLY, "Hindu Symbolisms", 129, n. 12.
105. This is also known as the Rogation of the Ninevites which recalls the event of Prophet Jonah within the belly of the fish and the later conversion of the Ninivites (Jonah 1-3). This may be the reason why in the ancient church at Kuravilangad (founded in the 4th century) at the concluding procession of the above mentioned fast 'a ship' is carried at the forefront.
106. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 41; VELLIAN, J., "The Great Fast: its Origin and modern Application", *One Church* 25 (1971): 23. (VELLIAN, "Great Fast".
107. JOSEPH THE INDIAN, *India in 1500 AD*, 98.
108. Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação* XII, 401; THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 62. Moreover from a hymn of Mar Aprēm, it is clear that already at the beginning of the fourth century there was a fast in connection with Pentecost. RAHMANI, I. E., *Studia Syriaca seu collectio Documentorum Haclenus ineditorum ex codicibus syriacis*, (Bayreuth, 1904), IV, 2, 77; VELLIAN, J., "Fasting in the East Syrian Church", *One Church* 25 (1971): 216.



De Monserrate says that they fasted on the eve of the feast of Transfiguration as well<sup>109</sup>. Sundays within the period of fasting were kept like ordinary Fridays and Wednesdays, on which there was abstinence from meat, fish and milk products.

On fast days – besides the above kind of abstinence – conjugal acts, the use of tobacco and chewing substances were also forbidden. For them, fasting was holy which began with a bath; no non-Christian could be touched and much time was spent in prayer<sup>110</sup>. As a prelude to important feasts or pilgrimages, Malabar Christians observe a fast, and the purity and strictness with which they were observed showed the influence of the Brahmins. The practice of using a separate set of pots and pans to cook vegetarian meals during periods of abstinence from meat is a typical example<sup>111</sup>. For the observance of fasts and abstinence as well as feasts, the day was computed from sunset to sunset.

### 2.2.3. Offerings (*Nerca*)

Devotees used to make offerings in connection with the feasts and

festivals of the church. Agape services called *Sadyā*, offerings of edibles and other objects, and fasts and other acts of penance comprised the important forms of offerings (*Nerca*)<sup>112</sup>. Included with these were the offering of rice boiled with coconut milk, milk-pudding, edible sweets prepared from rice flour and plantain, crawling on knees, remaining awake at night, the offering of fowl, and the offering in silver and gold of models of crosses, snakes (for protection from snakes), human eyes, ears, or legs (asking for a cure from diseases connected to those parts of the body) etc. For the agape feasts, priests would sit in the sanctuary and the lay faithful in the nave<sup>113</sup>.

### 2.2.4 Sign of the Cross

It was made from right to left when the person blessed himself.

### 2.2.5 Holy Water

Soil taken from the tomb of the Apostle would be mixed with water to be used as drink for the sick, as well as holy water. It was known as 'the grace of St Thomas' (*taybūta' dmār(y) T'ōma'*)<sup>114</sup>.

109. De MONSERRATE, *Informacion*, f. 149v as quoted by MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 179; PODIPARA, *Thomas Christians*, 93.

110. PODIPARA, *Thomas Christians*, 93. According to Vellian, this practice of the Thomas Christians closely resembles the description by Socrates, the church historian, of 5th century practice in the East. VELLIAN, "Great Fast", 23.

111. PULLAPILLY, "Hindu Symbolisms", 129.

112. SREEDHARA MENON, A., *Cultural Heritage of Kerala, An Introduction*, (Trivandrum, 1977), 56-57; PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 42-43.

113. THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 61-62.

114. PAYNE SMITH, *Syriac Dictionary*, 172. The Chaldeans use the *hnana'* which means metaphorically "a compound of oil, dust, and water mixed with the relics of saints or with earth from holy places; this was used for anointing the sick and for anointing at betrothal by the East Syrians". PAYNE SMITH, *Syriac Dictionary*, 149. In the words of Fr Podipara, it is a Chaldean tradition to use *hanana* i. e. the earth or other relics taken from the tomb of the saints mixed with oil and water. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 34.

## 2.2.6 Funeral Rites

The East Syrian ritual was followed for the burial of the dead. But some of the prescribed rituals had assumed a different traits in Malabar.

### 2.2.6.1 Death and Burial

The dying person was laid on a bed facing east and people around would chant prayers. The corpse was washed in warm water and anointed a few hours after death. It was then laid out at a prominent place in the house, the head towards the east.

As regards funeral services, common cemeteries in the churchyard came into use in the Sixteenth century (Mar Jacob's time). According to Dionysio, the dead were buried near the houses<sup>115</sup>. But Podipara says that the tombs were set around the church<sup>116</sup>.

### 2.2.6.2 Repast (*Pattnikanni*)

No food could be prepared or eaten in the house of the dead. After the burial, the priest would be given tender coconut to drink, which was then shared by all the near relatives of the dead person. The priest after reciting '*Annida*' would bless cumin seed. People would come and accept the 'peace' (*kasturi*) from the extended hand of the priest and take a few seeds of cumin seed. By breaking the fast thus, they would take pure vegetarian meals.

### 2.2.6.3 Mourning and other Functions

At the house of the dead, the relatives and friends used to pray and eat together for eight days. Certain classes of people, who were paid to do so, would bewail the death with

songs. If the testament of the deceased is not previously arranged, it would be organized by the friends and relatives assembled. The wife was given back the dowry and could be married after the lapse of one year. So also a young man of the family would grow his beard for one year to commemorate the departed.

### 2.2.6.4 Ritual Bath (*Pulakuli*)

On the eleventh day after burial, the Thomas Christians, like high-caste Hindus, practised the ritual bath (*pulakuli*) for purification from defilement due to contact with a deceased person.

### 2.2.6.5 Anniversary Celebration for the Dead (*Cattam* or *sradham*)

The Anniversary celebration for the Dead was called *cattam* or *sradham*. Liturgical prayers, commemorative meals held in common, almsgiving etc. were normally included. Priests and deacons officiated at such functions in the home<sup>117</sup>.

## 2.3. Particular Devotions

The Thomas Christians have special devotion to Mar Sliba, the Mother of Christ and Mar Thoma Sliha<sup>118</sup>.

### 2.3.1. *Mar Sliba'*

The Malabar Christians have always had a singular devotion to the cross (*Sliba'*). There is a liturgical period named after the cross (*Sliba'*), commencing with its feast on September 14. A *Sliba'* must necessarily be kept on the altar for the celebration of the Holy Qurbana, thus taking the place of Christ at the liturgical

115. DIONYSIO, "Informacao" 400; MUNDADAN, *Traditions*, 17 4.

116. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 42.

117. THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 58-59.

118. PODIPARA, "Hindu in Culture", 96.



celebration<sup>119</sup>. The *Sliba'* at the top of a church distinguishes it from a temple, mosque, Buddha pagoda and Jewish synagogue. It is quite common to have a granite *Sliba'* in front of the church, within the boundary wall. During processions, it is customary to go around the open air granite *Sliba'* once, and around the church three times, carrying the *Sliba'* and the Bible. Thomas Christian men used to wear the *Sliba'* on the tuft of their hair and women hang it on their necks<sup>120</sup>. The public blessing was given by raising the *Mar Sliba'*. The term *Sliba'* is applied to persons, places and institutions.

### 2.3.2 Mother of Christ

The Blessed Virgin Mary is given due veneration as the Mother of the Church. During the period of Annunciation-Nativity greeting and praises are frequently made to the Mother of Christ<sup>121</sup>. The second Friday after the Nativity is set apart to congratulate the Blessed Virgin on the birth of Christ<sup>122</sup>. Fr Podipara says that Wednesday is the day of our Lady,

as it is dedicated to her. It is the same in the Liturgy of the Hours<sup>123</sup>. It is a particular characteristic East Syrian Liturgy of the Hours to refer to the Blessed Virgin Mary as Mother of Christ, whenever she is mentioned<sup>124</sup>. Apart from the fasts prescribed by the East Syrian Rite, the Thomas Christians fasted seven days before September 8, in honour of Mary. This is a fast special to women<sup>125</sup>. The feast of Nativity and Assumption were of prime importance among the feasts. The feast of *Sunaya* (transitus) of the Blessed virgin Mary, on the 15th of August, is prepared by a fast of 15 days<sup>126</sup>.

Finally, many a church, institution and person is named after Mary. It is no exaggeration to say that it is difficult to trace a family among the Thomas Christians which does not have at least one girl with the name of 'Mary'.

### 2.3.3. Mar Thoma Slibha

Down the centuries the Syro-Malabar Church has been called 'The

119 W. C. VAN UNNIK, ed. & tr. *Nestorian Questions on the Eucharist*, by *Isho'yahb IV*, (Haarlem, 1937), 168, 229; PAYNGOT, C., "Cross in the Chaldean Tradition", *Christian Orient* 2 (1981): 106.

120 PLACID, "The Syro-Malabarians, their Life and their Activities", *NRSM* 12 (1956): 247; BERNARD OF ST THOMAS, *St Thomas Christians* 382.

121. The angelic salutation to Mary is frequently remembered in this period. Her virginity is highly extolled in the *Mawiba' d-Lelya* of the third Sunday PATHIKULANGARA, *Law of Thomas*, 59-62.

122 MOOLAN, J., *Paurastya Suriani Sabha Calender* (East Syrian Church Calendar) OIRSI 123, (Kottayam, 1989). 27. [= MOOLAN, *East Syrian Church Calendar*].

123. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 42.

124. MOOLAN, *East Syrian Church Calendar*, 94.

125. Those who kept this fast would remain in the church till midday, and when leaving would eat the edibles left for them at the door of the church. PODIPARA, "Hindu in Culture", 102.

126. The catholics have a full separate Divine Office for this feast and it was certainly used by them before the definition of the corporal Assumption of our Lady into heaven was made by Pope Pius XII. PODIPARA, P. J.: "The Mariology of the Church of the East", *Christian Orient* 11 (1981), 179.

Church of St. Thomas', and the Christians: 'The Thomas Christians'. The tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore is a living monument to the faith and history of the Thomas Christians. Connected with this tomb, there were many customs and practices among the Thomas Christians including, pilgrimages to the tomb from Malabar after careful preparation or the sanctifying of water with earth taken from the tomb etc.<sup>127</sup>.

In her liturgical prayers, especially in the Holy Qurbana and in the Divine Office, the name of the Apostle is commemorated. So, too, many churches, institutions and persons are named after the Apostle. According to Fr. Podipara, children were mainly taught songs in praise of St. Thomas<sup>128</sup>.

The feasts of St. Thomas were all dear to the Thomas Christians. The Octave of Easter, known among the Thomas Christians as the 'New Sunday' was solemnly celebrated in honour of the Apostle who, at the vision of the Risen Christ, confessed, "My Lord and My God"<sup>129</sup>. Pilgrimage to Malayattoor, where the Apostle is believed to have

prayed, is made by many Christians<sup>130</sup>. The feast of St. Thomas on July 3 has been called *Dukrānā* (commemoration). It is a great feast on which the Thomas Christians celebrate the death of the Apostle<sup>131</sup>. According to the testimony of Amador Correia, a Portuguese Jesuit, the Thomas Christians also celebrated a particular feast on 21 November to commemorate the arrival of St. Thomas on the Malabar coast<sup>132</sup>. The miraculous bleeding of St. Thomas' Cross at Mylapur is commemorated on 18th December.

### 3. 0. Conclusion

The *Tōmā Mārgā* is the reflection, the icon of the very faith experience and expression, in its totality, of the Thomas Christians of India. It is manifested through the liturgical, spiritual, theological, disciplinary and cultural patrimony of this Apostolic Church<sup>133</sup>. As such it forms part of the Divine Revelation (OE 1) and is an essential heritage of the Church Universal (OE 5). Therefore, we are bound to preserve it "whole and entire" (OE 2), make an organic development

127. THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 8-22.

128. PODIPARA, *Our Rite*, 43.

129. For a *memra* for the New Sunday on the Apparition to Thomas, see YOUSIF, P., "The Apostle Thomas in the Witness of Saint Ephrem of Nisibis", in *Homage to Mar Cariattil, Pioneer Malabar Ecumenist*, ed. C. PAYNGOT, (Rome, 1987), 81-85.

130. PULLAPILLY, ne "Hindu Symbolisms", 129.

131. PODIPARA, *Thomas Christians*, 94. With regard to the celebration of *Dukrānā*, cf. KOODAPUZHA, *Indian Church History*, 59-62.

132. Da SILVA REGO, *Documentação IX*, 298-299; THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 60; NEELANKAVIL, "Feast of the Thomas Christians", 113.

133. We may almost identify it with the definition of a Rite given by the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* Can. 28-§1. "Ritus est patrimonium liturgicum, theologicum, spirituale et disciplinare cultura ac rerum adiunctis historiae populorum distinctum, quod modo fidei vivendae uniuscuiusque Ecclesiae sui iuris proprio exprimitur".



of it (OE 6), and to return to the ancestral ways, if we have improperly fallen away from it (OE 6).

By the fact that the *Tōmā Mārgā* is related to every aspect of the Christian Life of the Thomas Christians, we need to have a wholistic approach to it. It can be realized by applying the axiom *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Metropolitan Mar Joseph Powathil warns against the present-day tendency of limiting Law of Thomas to a merely juridical aspect<sup>134</sup>. Its liturgical, theological, spiritual, disciplinary and cultural aspects are of equal importance.

The present study sheds clear light on the double patrimony of the Thomas Christians of India as synthesised in the Law of Thomas. It is indo-oriental, but more precisely, it is Dravidian and East Syrian. These two patrimonies are never contradictory, rather, they are complementary because they represent the same Asian milieu. Moreover, their mutual acceptance and 'union' can be explained through their apostolic, cultural, linguistic and commercial affinities<sup>135</sup>. Hence we have

'to retain, cherish and observe' both patrimonies to the best of our ability (OE 4)<sup>136</sup>.

The *Tōmā Mārgā* is the organic and healthy 'union' of these two major Asian traditions. Therefore it can be representative of Asian Christianity itself<sup>137</sup>. Its rediscovery, through patient and open-minded research, will provide a new impetus to the Asian Church in particular and to the Church Universal in general.

In view of this, we need a comprehensive study, focusing on the liturgical, theological, spiritual, juridical and cultural expressions of the East Syrian sources and Indian traditions. The particularity of the latter is the expression of faith experience in its East Syrian form. Thus the *Tōmā Mārgā* is the synthesis of that faith experience and its expression, neither separating nor contradicting itself, but rather forming an organic whole with its indo-oriental identity, which, in itself, is the result of the mutual enrichment of two Asian traditions.

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134. For him it is the mistaken notion of identifying the reflection of a thing with its reality. Such an attempt does not bring out the essence. Hence he proposes the rediscovery of the *Tōmā Mārgā* based on the spirituality and theology of the Church which is reflected in the Liturgy. POWATHIL, "Identity of the Syro-Malabar Church", 14. An example of the partial understanding or misphrasing of the Law of Thomas: "The descriptions given in this chapter indicate that the Thomas Christians had evolved a canon law adapted to their circumstances. It was called the 'Law of Thomas', their particular law". THAZHATH, *Juridical Sources*, 63.
135. For details PODIPARA, *Rise and Decline*, 5-14; KOODAPUZHA, X., "The Indian Church of the Thomas Christians", *Christian Orient* 1 (1980): 23-27; KOODAPUZHA, *Indian Church History*, 104-110.
136. Here we should observe that to consider the East Syrian Patrimony as "foreign" and as something "imposed" is highly detrimental to the rediscovery of the Law of Thomas itself.
137. Hage presents Syriac Christianity as the Asian form of Christianity. HAGE, W., *Syriac Christianity in the East*, Lectures given at the St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, Kottayam in March 1986, Mōrān 'Ēth' ō Series 1, Kottayam, 1988.

# The Persian Crosses in India are Christian, not Manichaeian

## Introduction

In recent years a thesis has been proposed by some people that the cross generally known as the St Thomas Cross is not Christian, but Manichaeian. Mr P. K. Mathew of Ettumanoor is one of the proponents of this thesis.<sup>1</sup> The main authority on which he bases his thesis is Dr A. C. Burnell's article, "On some Pahlavi Inscriptions in South India," published in the *Indian Antiquary* III (1874) 308-316. I would like to draw the attention of the readers that the conclusion of Dr Burnell's article actually contradicts the main thesis of Mr P. K. Mathew.

*Burnell's thesis: The Pahlavi inscription on the Crosses is anti-Manichaeian, but the early Persian settlers in South India were Manichaeian.* The Pahlavi inscription around the Mount Cross and the two Kottayam Crosses was read and interpreted somewhat differently by Burnell, Martin Haug and E. W. West. Burnell's interpretation was, "In punishment by the Cross (was) the suffering of this (one): (He) who (is) the

true Christ and God above and guide ever pure." Haug interpreted the same as "Who believes in the Messiah and God above and in the Holy Ghost is redeemed through the grace of him who bore the cross." Dr Haug was of the opinion that the order of the persons of the Trinity proves that the inscriptions to be Nestorian in doctrine and origin.<sup>2</sup> West read it as, "What freed the true Messiah, the forgiving, the upraising, from hardship? The crucifixion from the tree, and the anguish of this." Burnell finally restructured his own reading of the inscription as follows: (Syriac) "Let me not glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" (Pahlavi) "Who is the true Messiah and God above and Holy Ghost."<sup>3</sup>

Burnell then drew his conclusion, "This statement (inscription) appears to be intended to contradict the Manichaeian doctrine that the Crucified Messiah was the son of a poor widow, and not Jesus. If the Pahlavi inscriptions were Manichaeian, they would be in a different character."

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1. P. K. MATHEW, "St Thomas Cross is certainly Manichaeian" (Malayalam) *Vachanadhara* 12 (1993) No. 8, pp. 15-22. And also another pamphlet by the same author, *Mar Thomas Cross or Manichaeian Cross* (Malayalam) Kudamaloor.
  2. Not necessarily Nestorian, but Christian in general, because the Pauline salutation (2 Cor. 13:14) has the same order of Persons of the Trinity.
  3. All the texts are as included in Burnell's article. p. 314.



In another article in the *Indian Antiquary* IV (1875) 181-183, Burnell elaborates; This fact of their origin (Nestorian), taken together with the use of Pahlavi seems to me to explain the whole matter ... the Cross and inscription of Si-ngan-fu (in China) was erected by some in 781 A. D. But at that time Pahlavi was nearly extinct in Persia. Why then should Nestorian missionaries use a difficult language foreign to themselves and hardly used at all except that it was the language of the people to whom they preached in south India? ... Again, why should Nestorian Missionaries have used the formula we find in their inscriptions, if the people to whom they preached held Trinitarian doctrines at all? The most probable conclusion is that the Nestorians came to Malabar as missionaries to unorthodox Persian settlers.<sup>4</sup>

Hence, Burnell's conclusion is that the crosses with the Pahlavi inscription were Nestorian and anti-Manichaean. They were, however, intended against former Persian settlers in Malabar, who were Manichaeans. That is why I noted in the introduction of this article that the conclusion of Dr Burnell's article actually contradicts the main thesis of Mr P. K. Mathew.

*Burnell's wrong premises: a) that the Indian Apostolate of St Thomas is a legend:* It would be a different matter to investigate why Burnell thought that the early Persian settlers in

Malabar were Manichaeans. He was more of a scholar in South Indian Palaeography rather than a historian.<sup>5</sup> Coming across the Pahlavi inscriptions on the crosses and on one of the Quilon Copper-plates, Burnell correctly held them to be relics of Persian immigrants. He, however, made a wrong hypothesis that those inscriptions were intended against earlier Persian immigrants who might have been Manichaeans! Why? Because, as it shall be shown below from Burnell's own articles, he had a prejudice about the Christians in Persia of the early centuries that they were Gnostics or Manichaeans. This is also the observation of Professor Edward Collins against Burnell.<sup>6</sup>

Burnell did not accept the Indian apostolate of St. Thomas. He writes: The visit of St Thomas (the Apostle) to India has long been a favourite legend, but it rested on the apocryphal *Acta Thomae* which seemed totally devoid of an historical foundation... This, however, is no warrant for supposing that St Thomas visited Southern India, an idea which appears to have arisen in the middle ages, and has been since supported on fanciful grounds by some missionaries.<sup>7</sup>

Neither did Burnell make much of the existence of a great East Syrian Church in the Persian empire, and its well recorded connections with the Church of India. According to the living tradition of the St Thomas Christians, 72 Christian families of Babylonia under

4. *Ibid.* 183.

5. See his monograph: A. C. BURNELL, *Elements of the South Indian Palaeography from the fourth to the seventh century A. D.* (London 1878). Also "The oldest known South Indian Alphabet (Vattezhuthu)", *IA* I (1872) 229-230.

6. See *IA* 4 (1875) 273.

7. Cf. *IA* 3 (1874) 309.

the leadership of Thomas Kinayi immigrated to Cranganore in A. D. 345, as directed by the Catholics of the East Syrian Church of the Persian Empire, in order to reinvigorate the Church established by St Thomas the Apostle in India, which at that time was in a dwindling state due to persecutions from without and dissensions from within.<sup>8</sup> About the above said Thomas Kinayi Burnell writes: "Another Syrian legend mentions a Kānān Tōmā, a foreigner as having preached in Malabar. This may be the disciple of Manes". About the coming of Mar Saphor and Mar Aphrottu from Babylon he says, "both of these are evidently *Persian* names. Of the date of their arrival nothing is, however, known" and so he brushes it out as a legend of little value.

b) that the first notice of a Christian mission to India ... is that of Persians who were Manichaeans. On the other hand, any slight hind in the sources at a Manichaean-Indian connection was made much of. Burnell says, "The first historical notice of a Christian mission to India we have is that of Persians who were Manichaeans. It is uncertain, though not improbable, that Mani himself preached in India." His source is *Al Nadim* as quoted in Flügel's *Mani* p. 52: "Mani called on Hind and Sin and the people of Khorasan, and made a deputy of one of his companions in each province." Burnell mentions also a *Greater Epistle to the Indians* as one of the works of Mani. From Burnell's own words, one may note how arbitrarily he interpreted his sources to suit his thesis. For example on the Indian Apostolate

of St. Thomas, he writes, "India was in early centuries A. D. the name of nearly the whole East including China and thus the mention of India proves nothing." On the other hand, about Manes' disciples sent to India, he asserts, "As to the meaning of India, there can be no doubt in this case. The Arabs used it in a perfectly defined sense."<sup>9</sup> About the Christians of Male, Kalliena, Taprobane (Ceylon) mentioned in the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes, Burnell specially notes that they were Persians. On the 9th century endowment of the Tarissa Church of Quilon, he remarks, "though it was attested by Indians, Arabs, and *Persians*, there is not the least trace of Syrians anywhere to be found in it." Then as though all *Persians*, were Manichaeans, Burnell says in the note, "There is a strong reason for believing, that the Persian colony at Cranganore (Burnell mistakenly assigned the Tarissa Church of Quilon to Cranganore) was Manichaean, in the name of their little principality - *Manigramam*... in all probability a foreign word, and if *Persian*, can only refer to the followers of Mani". One may note here how forced is Burnell's interpretation of *Manigramam*, mentioned in the copper plate grants, which is generally understood to be the name of a Christian principality or a Christian Merchants' guild juxtaposed *Anchuvanam*, the Jewish principality or Merchants' guild.<sup>10</sup>

As a strong argument for his thesis Burnell quoted from Abu Zaid's work of A. D. 916. "There is a numerous colony of Jews in Sarandib (ie, Ceylon),

8. Cf. J. KOLLAPARAMBIL, *The Babylonian Origin of Southists among the St Thomas Christians*, OCA 241 (Rome 1992) *passim*.

9. IA 4 (1875) 182.

10. Cf. K. N. DANIEL, "The Anchuvanam and the Manigramam of the Kottayam Plates of Tanu Iravi or the Jews and Christians of Malabar" IA 53 (1924) 257-261. While interpreting *Manigramam*. Rev. H. Gundert had first



and people of other religions especially Manichaeans." Burnell is citing the text from H. M. Elliot's *History of India* Vol. I, p. 10. I have some reservation about the accuracy of the text, and so I am trying to check the original sources. Conceding for argument's sake the authenticity of the text, it must be noted that it only speaks of the presence of some Manichaeans in Ceylon. From that, however, one cannot argue that there were Manichaeans also in South India. But exactly that is what Burnell did.

Thus, denying the Indian apostolate of St. Thomas, and giving his own interpretations to his sources, namely "*Mani's Epistle to the Indians* the Indo-Syrian legend of Saphor, the testimony of Cosmas in the 6th century, the tablets ... (cross inscriptions), the Arab traveller Abu Zaid, and the Syrian grant B," Burnell asserted, "all go to show that the earliest Christian settlements in India were Persian, and probably, therefore, Manichaean or Gnostic". (p. 311).

c) that Christianity made but little progress in Persia except in the directions of Gnosticism and Manichaeism. If the earliest Christian settlements in India were Persian, how does it follow that they were, therefore, Manichaean or Gnostic? How could Burnell make such a conclusion? His own defective

understanding of the Persian Christianity's history seems to give the answer. According to him:

Christianity made but little progress in Persia except in the directions of Gnosticism and Manichaeism; but these were much persecuted from the beginning, and ... much disliked and persecuted by the Muhammadan rulers of Persia. The more orthodox Churches had meanwhile made immense progress in Babylonia, being patronized by the Khalifs ... and thus both in Babylonia and elsewhere, took the place ... of all the earlier Persian sects (p. 311). In fact, however, the condition of

Christianity in the Persian empire from the early centuries was much different from what Burnell wrote. Under the Sassanian rule (from III century to VII) the East Syrian Church had gathered considerable strength in Persia proper, Khuzistan, Babylonia, Adiabene and Mesopotamia. Towards the end of the Sassanian rule, before the Islamic conquest in the middle of the 7th century, the metropolitan province of Riwardushir alone in Persia proper had grown into a superprovince having 18 suffragan eparchies.<sup>11</sup>

The Sassanian rulers of the Persian empire hailed from Khuzistan; their capital cities were Ahwaz in Khuzistan

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mentioned the story of Manica Vachakar; yet he was more inclined to think that it was the name of a Christian principality favored by the Perumals. After Gundert's article had gone to the press, he received some remarks from Rev. Mr. Peet of Mavelicara. Gundert forwarded the same to the editor with no comment. Mr. Peet thought himself justified in calling *Manigramam* a Christian principality, but added. "I now venture the conjecture, that they were disciples of Mani, a colony of Manichaeans, such as the Arabian travellers found in Ceylon." H GUNDEBT. "Translation and Analysis of the Ancient Documents Engraved on Copper ..." *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, XIII (1844) No. 30: 123, 146.

11. Cf. W. G. YOUNG, *Patriarch, Shah, and Caliph* (Rawalpindi 1974) 41-44, 98-99.

and Ctesiphon in Babylonia. The Pahlavi that was developed in the Sassanian period was the court language of the Persian empire, and therefore, it was likely that all Persians, Christians and non-Christian alike, would learn that language. At any rate there is no reason why people knowing the Pahlavi language should have been Gnostics or Manichaeans, and not Christians. The East Syrian Christians themselves have used the Persian language as a medium for propagating the Christian doctrines in Persia and India, as it is recorded in the *Chronicle of Seert* that in about 470 A. D. Ma'na of Riwardushir wrote religious discourses, canticles and hymns, in Persian and translated the theological works of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia from Greek and sent copies to the islands of the sea and to India.<sup>12</sup> Hence it is clear that, though the Persian Church used Syriac as the liturgical language, the medium of Christian instruction was the Persian language. Hence the Pahlavi inscription around the Persian crosses of Madras and Kerala could very well have been the work of Persian Christians.

Manes himself was a native of Babylonia. He and his syncretic religion found favour with the Sassanian Shahanshah Sapor I (240-273), but lost it under Bahram I (274-277). Under Bahram's orders Mani was imprisoned. When he died in chains, the corpse was mutilated, and the severed head was hung up over the city gate of Bet-Lapat in Khuzistan<sup>13</sup>. Manichaeism as a religion never had a vast following in Persia.

The East Syrian Church, on the other hand, was comparatively much

stronger and more influential in Sassanian Persia. Besides, there are incontrovertible historical sources which speak of many ecclesial contacts of East the Syrian Church with the Christian Community in India. This being the case, from the fact that "the earliest Christian settlement in India were Persian, there was no justification for Burnell's sudden conclusion that they were "probably therefore, Manichaean or Gnostic."

Collins refuted Burnell: That the Manichaeans were the first Christian missionaries to India...we absolutely have no evidence. Soon after Burnell's article was published, Prof. Richard Collins, who was formerly the principal of C. M. S. College, Kottayam, and a research scholar in the history of the St. Thomas Christians, wrote articles pointing out the flaws in Burnell's inferences and refuting his thesis. He argued in this fashion:

With regard to the Apostle Thomas visit to Malabar, Dr. Burnell says there is "no warrant for supposing that St. Thomas visited South India—an idea which appears to have arisen in the Middle Ages, and has been since supported on fanciful grounds by some missionaries". But it appears to me that the grounds for supposing that the Manichaeans were the "first Christian missionaries" to India—at least to Malabar—are much "more fanciful." For this fact we absolutely have no evidence... There is no ground whatever for supposing that Knān Thōmā was Manichaean; nor does it follow that because Mar Saphor and Mar Aphrottu came from Babylon, that they were Manichaeans.<sup>14</sup>

12. Cf. *Patrologia Orientalis*, VII, 117.

13. See. GEO WIDENGREN, *Mani and Manichaeism*, (New York 1965) 41-42.

14. IA 4 (1875) 154



For about two years, refutations, rebuttals and rejoinders continued in the dispute on this subject between Burnell and Collins<sup>15</sup>. Burnell had a forerunner in Mathurin Vessiere de la Croze, who argued that the tradition about the Indian apostolate of St. Thomas was but a fable originated from confounding St. Thomas the Apostle with two of his namesakes, namely Thomas, a disciple of Manes, and Thomas Cana—the first who brought Christianity to India in the Manichaean way, and the second who brought the Indian Church into close contact with the East Syrian Church.<sup>16</sup>

After the Burnell-Collins dispute, the thesis that the early Christians in India were Manichaeans remained refuted and discredited. It was a dead issue among scholarly historians. In the meantime many ancient historical, theological, and canonical sources of the East Syrian Church were published,<sup>17</sup> which brought to light clear proofs for the existence of a strong East-Syrian Church in Sassanian Persia and its ecclesial contacts with the Church in India.

Winkworth's new interpretation of the Pahlavi inscription on the Cross. Half a century after the Burnell-Collins dispute, Scholars such as C.P.T. Winkworth and F. C. Burkitt made

fresh studies on the Persian Crosses in Madras and in Kerala. They found that the same Pahlavi text was inscribed on the crosses at Madras, Kottayam, Kadamattam and Muttuchira. Their reading of Pahlavi inscription was quite different from that of Burnell. They read and interpreted it as: "My Lord Christ, have mercy upon Afras, son of Chaharbukht, the Syrian, who cut (preserved) this". They even suggested that Afras named in the inscription might be Bishop Mar Aprot of A.D. 825, one of the so called *Kandisangal* of the St. Thomas Christians. Winkworth and Burkitt had not even a word about a Manichaean origin of these Persian Crosses<sup>18</sup>. It is noteworthy that a similar invocation in favour of the inscriber was found on a redwood beam inside the St. Thomas Tomb Church at Mylapore. Adjoining a small Cross the inscription in the language of the place runs: "Lord accept this alms of Joane your servant and receive me when you appear in your holy glory"<sup>19</sup>

Veneration of the Cross in the East Syrian Church. As far as the Cross is concerned, the Syrian Churches especially the East Syrians, had great veneration for it, even to the extent of considering the sign of the Cross as one of the sacraments of the Church.<sup>20</sup> As far back as A. D. 250, they

15. Cf. IA II (1873) 273-274; IA III (1874) 308-316; IA IV (1875) 153-155, 181-183, 311-314; IA V (1876) 25-26.
16. M. V. DE LA CROZE, *Historie du christianisme des Indes*, I (La Haye (1752) 70.
17. See Syriac or Arabic works published in *Patrologia Orientalis*, *Patrologia Syriaca*, the Syriac section of the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (CSCO), *The Liber Turris* published by H. GISMONDI, the many works edited by P. BEDJAN etc.
18. C. P. T. WINKWORTH, "A new Interpretation of Pahlavi Cross-Inscription of Southern India", JTS XXI (1929) 237-244; reproduced in *Kerala Society Papers* I series 3 (1930) 159-168. Cf. also KSP I, series 5 (1930) 267-268; KSP I, series 6 (1930) 320-323.
19. A. M. MUNDADAN, *Traditions of the St. Thomas Christians* (Bangalore 1970) 56.
20. Cf. Abdiso of Soba, *Liber argaritae*, tract IV, ch I and Tract T, ch, 2: A. MAI ed. SVNC X, part II, 355, 361-362.

had erected Crosses at their tombs, as is evidenced by the 60 Christian tombs discovered in the Island of Kharg of the Persian Gulf.<sup>21</sup>

So the veneration of the Cross by the East Syrian predates the death of Manes (277), or the discovery of the wood of the true Cross by Empress Helena. Helena was a Syrian Christian, and probably her Church's veneration of the Cross might have urged her to search for the true Cross.

Crosses in bas-relief on granite slabs, the like of the Mount Cross and Kottayam Crosses, are very common in the ancient Syrian Churches and monasteries of Irak. The symbolical ornaments of the crosses do vary. On my research tour in Irak in January/February 1990, I have taken photographs of several such Crosses at the Meschinta Church in Mossul and at the monasteries of Mar Bahnan, Mar Mathai, and Rabban Hormisdas.

*Crosses Venerated by the St. Thomas Christians at Quilon, Cranganore and Mylapore.* The Portuguese missionaries of the 16th century found that the Churches of the St. Thomas Christians had no statues, but only crosses, without, however, the figure of the Crucified Jesus. They had it in gold, silver, wood and granite stones. The Our Lady of Mercy Church at Quilon, where Mar Sapor and Mar Prot

were buried, had three altars, each having a Cross on it, of gold on the central altar, of silver on the side altars. The Christians gave one of those silver Crosses to Captain Albuquerque as a gift to King Manuel of Portugal in 1503. At Cranganore, the houses of the Christians could be distinguished by their surmounting Crosses.<sup>22</sup>

The first Portuguese visitors to the St. Thomas tomb Church at Mylapore in 1517 found the Church in a ruined condition. There was nothing but crosses in the church, and no images. They found several crosses and peacocks painted on the tower, crosses on the altars, and many crosses carved on the portals. The beam above the main door was of brazil or sandal wood on which were carved three crosses, the central one being at a higher level than the side ones.<sup>23</sup> On the Big Mount and Little Mount also were found many crosses in addition to the so-called miraculous Cross of the Big Mount. Already in 1523, the Portuguese had discovered the ruins of an old chapel lying East-West on the Big Mount, and in that year they erected an oratory there. The Miraculous Cross with the Pahlavi inscription was accidentally discovered, while digging for the foundation of a new church in March 1547. It was found with its face downwards among the ruins of an earlier structure.<sup>24</sup> It must be

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21. Cf. E. YARSHATER, ed. *The Cambridge History of Iran* III, 2 (Cambridge 1983) 929. Dr. Ernst Herzfeld discovered these tombs with crosses in 1924. See his letter to T. K. Joseph on 22-12-1924. *Kerala Society Papers* I. series 3 (1930) 165. See also E. E. HERZFELD. *Archeological History of Iran* (London 1930) 103-104.
  22. A. M. MUNDADAN, *The Arrival of the Portuguese in India and the Thomas Christians under Mar Jacob* (Banglore, 1967) 75, 73.
  23. A. M. MUNDADAN, *Traditions of the St. Thomas Christians* (Bangalore 1970) 32-33.
  24. *Ibid* 37, 78-80. See especially p. 80, note 62, where Mundadan gives several references to the fact that all the crosses on the Big Mount, Little Mount, in the tomb Church of Mylapore, and in Malabar were more or less on the same model as the Miraculous Cross.



remembered that though there was a Christian community at Mylapore in the fourteenth century, no Christian was found there in the second decade of the sixteenth century when the Portuguese visited the place. There was still the tomb Church in a ruined condition. Its custodian was an old Muslim, who asserted that his grandparents were Christians. Thus uncared for a long period the Christian shrines on the Big Mount were totally ruined and dilapidated. Among the ruins lay the Miraculous Cross which must have been an object of veneration of the once flourishing Christian Community of the Big Mount area.

The granite tablets with Cross in bas-relief and Pahlavi inscriptions at Madras, Kottayam, etc. are, therefore, the ancient monuments of the East Syrian Church's relation with the Indian Church. Considering the sign of the Cross as a sacrament of the Church, the East Syrian Church, and the Indian Church in communion with the East Syrian, were venerating the Holy Cross of Jesus, and certainly not a cosmic or symbolic cross of the Manichaens.

*A Christian interpretation of the symbolic ornaments of the Persian Crosses is possible.* As I stated above, the symbolic ornaments of and around the ancient Crosses found in Iraq and India are of various kinds. There are of course, certain common features. Fr. Joseph Vazhuthanapally has, in his research work, analyzed the common features of these symbolic ornaments namely the steps, the leaves, the fruits-formation on the Cross itself and the dove. The steps are interpreted as Golgota, the leaves and fruits as symbolizing the tree of life, and

the dove the Holy Spirit. The Cross now being propagated as St. Thomas Cross exactly resembles only two of the ancient Crosses in India, namely the one at Periamalai, Madras and one of the Crosses at Valiapally, Kottayam. The decorative formation beneath the figure of the Cross in this model could be interpreted as leaves and / or petals of flower. In all other models found at Kottayam, Kadamattam, Muttuchira, Kaduthuruthy, Kothanalloor, Alangadu, etc. they look clearly as leaves. The proponents of the Manichaeon thesis do not explain why these symbolic decorations are to be interpreted only in a Manichaeon way. These decorations can and do yield a Christian interpretation. For example, Fr Vazhuthanapally quotes from St Iranaeus' *Demonstrations (Patrologia Orientalis Vol. 12, p. 685)*: "The sin came by a tree, is abolished by a tree (cross), because the Son of Man obeying God was nailed to the wood destroying the power of evil and introduced the power and knowledge of Good to the world."<sup>25</sup> The decorations of the Mount Cross can very well be interpreted through the symbolism of the Tree of life that destroyed "the power of evil" and brought "the knowledge of good" to the world. Why then should these decorations be interpreted as symbolizing the Manichaeon realms of light and darkness?

By no means can the Si-ngan-fu monument be interpreted as Manichaeon, because the hierarchical heads of the East Syrian Church of that time are clearly recorded on it. The cross is pictured on that monument as standing on a lotus flower.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the decorations beneath the Mount Cross could be seen as petals of lotus

25. J. VAZHUTHANAPALLY, *The Biblical and Archeological Foundations of the Mar Thoma Sliba* (Kottayam 1990) 102.

26. See T. VAZHUTHANAPALLY, *op. cit.*, 20.

flower. If the lotus beneath the Singan-fu Cross was to signify victory over Buddhism, the same can be the symbolism of the decorations beneath the Mount Cross as well; in this case, however, may be victory over Hinduism.

*The Kottayam Crosses from Cranganore via Kaduthuruthy.* The Kottayam Crosses are said to have been brought from Cranganore via Kaduthuruthy. The Crosses were taken from Cranganore probably in A. D. 1524, when in a war with the king of Cranganore, Samoothiri of Calicut assisted by Muslim soldiers conquered, sacked and destroyed Cranganore. All the three Churches of Cranganore - St Mary's, St Thomas' and St Kuriakose - were burned down. The Christians fled with the valuable relics they could take with them.<sup>27</sup> A.D. 1524 was in the 9th century of the Hejira era. Possibly confounding the Hejira year recorded in some Muslim account of the above mentioned event, some historians have written that in the 9th century A.D. Muslims conquered Cranganore and the Christians of St Thomas fled from there.

The Crosses were first brought to Kaduthuruthy. Then they were removed to Kottayam, probably in 1550. In that year, in a battle at the Island of Vaduthala near Vaikam, the Portuguese commander, Francisco Silveira de Meneses, helping the Cochin King's army, killed the king of Vadakkankur (Kaduthuruthy). The whole army of Vadakkankur then formed itself into Chaver squads and vowed to avenge the murder of their king by killing

all Christians, the co-religionists of the murderer.<sup>28</sup> On that occasion even the Christian chieftain of the family of Kunnacherry, who was one of the ministers of the murdered king, had to leave the kingdom of Vadakkankur. He, with as many Christians as he could gather, fled to Mulanthuruthy. He had taken with him the *Venthanmudi* now preserved at the Mulanthuruthy Church which he himself caused to be built. Similarly on the same occasion, another group of Christians of Kaduthuruthy might have taken the tablets of the Persian Crosses to Kottayam, where a new Church was built in the same year of 1550.<sup>29</sup>

*The burden of proof is on the proponents of the Manichaeian thesis:* a) *that the Manichaeian religion was propagated in South India.* Those who hold the Persian Crosses to be Manichaeian in origin have to establish one fundamental fact that the Manichaeian religion was once propagated in South India. Burnell and others cite some texts from Al Nadim, Al Biruni, etc., which say that Mani himself or one of his disciples, Thomas, preached in India (Hind). However, modern scholars after extensive research in Manichaeian sources, affirm that the India or Hind mentioned in the cited texts refers only to the then North-Western regions of India which are now included in Pakistan.

The *Kephalaia* has the following text regarding young Mani's India mission of a little more than one year. (A. D 241/242):

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27. A. M. MUNDADAN, *The Arrival of the Portuguese in India and the Thomas Christians under Mar Jacob* (Bangalore 1967) 99-100.
  28. Cf. J. WICKI, *Documenta Indica*, Vol III, 796, 810. G. SCHURHAMMER, *Die Zeitgenossischen Quellen zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asiens*, (Rome 1962) No. 4530.
  29. P. U. LUKAS, ed. *Purathanapattukal*, (Kottayam 1992) 61: Song of Kottayam Valiyapally.



At the close of King Ardashir's years, I set out to preach. I sailed to the land of the Indians. I preached to them the hope of life and I chose there a good selection. In the year that King Ardashir died and his son Shapur became King, I sailed from the land of the Indians to the land of the Persians and from the land of Persia I came to the land of Babylon, Maisan, and the land of Khuzistan.<sup>30</sup>

On this text Prof. Geo Widengren writes, "the voyage is likely to have taken him (Mani) no farther than the Iranian provinces of Turan and Makran as well as north-western India, Gandhara (i.e., to those regions now comprising Pakistan)".<sup>31</sup> The reasons for his conclusions are the following: Those regions had been under strong Parthian influence since about 130 B. C. Mani's Parthian descent and his proficiency in the Middle Parthian language must have led him first to those regions to test his new gospel there. Besides, Buddhism from early times was particularly strong in those regions, and so it must have been there that Buddhism made a deep impression on Mani, and there by became one of the ingredients of Mani's syncretic religion.<sup>32</sup> In fact at the time of Sapor I, the above mentioned regions were part of the Persian empire as is

noted in the famous inscription of Sapor at Ka'ba i Zardust.<sup>33</sup>

The next time Mani thought of revisiting those territories of his first ministrations was when he sensed the threat to his life under the unfavorable Shah Bahram I. Mani had reached Hormizd-Ardeshir with the intention of proceeding "unto the Kushan realm with its centres at Kabul and Gandhara". There he received a royal veto upon his visit to the Kushan area. "Thereupon he turned back in anger and distress".<sup>34</sup>

On the alleged mission of Mani's disciple Thomas to India there is a reference in the *Chronicle of Seert* (11th century), which says that Mani sent his disciples Addai to Yemen and Thomas to India, but they returned complaining that the people did not like to hear their discourse.<sup>35</sup> Mani must have sent his disciple Thomas to the same India where he himself had preached. According to Epiphanius, however, it was in Judea that Mani's disciple Thomas preached the Manichaean gospel.<sup>36</sup> The *Acta Archelai* (ch. 64) speaks also of missionary activities of the same Thomas in Syria and Egypt later.<sup>37</sup>

After Mani's death, his syncretic religion was under persecution in Persia by the Sassanian Shahs and

30. The text is cited from G. WIDENGREN, *Mani and Manichaeism* (New York 1965) 28-29.

31. *Ibid.*, 28. Prof. KURT RUDOLF is also of the same opinion. Cf. his book, *Gnosis* (English edn. Edinburgh 1983) 330.

32. G. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.* 28-29.

33. See E. HONIGMANN and A. MARICQ, *Recherches sur les Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (Bruxelles 1953) 40: nos 22, 23 and 24. and also the map. Cf. also E. YARSHATER, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol 3, 2 (Cambridge 1983) 748-749: map 14: provinces of early Sassanian Iran. In these maps Hind or Hindestan is marked on the West of the River Indus.

34. See G. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.* 37-38. cited from Manichaean *Homilies*.

35. *Patrologia Orientalis* IV, 227.

36. *Panarion* LXVI, 5, 3.

37. See G. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.* 117.

Abbassid Caliphs. It did, however, spread into Egypt, central Asia and China. But there is nothing in the sources to substantiate Manichaeism's spread into India proper.<sup>38</sup>

b) *that Pahlavi was the language of the Manichaeans*: Another assumption of the proponents of the Manichaean thesis in regard to the Persian Crosses in South India is that the language of the Manichaeans was Pahlavi. A close examination of the Manichaean sources, however, cannot sustain such an assumption. All except one of Mani's many works were written in eastern Aramaic closely related to Edessene Syriac, using a script employed in Southern Babylonia in the third century. The only exception is *Sabbuhragan* dedicated to Shahanshah Sapor I, which Mani for obvious reasons wrote in Shapur's language, the Middle Persian. Mani as "a Parthian could speak Middle Parthian, but not Middle Persian quite correctly". That is why at his fatal meeting with Bahram I, Mani needed the service of Nūhzadag—an interpreter.<sup>39</sup>

The Manichaean literature after Mani's time also were written in the eastern Aramaic and South Babylonian script. As the Manichaean Church spread into areas stretching from Egypt to central Asia, many of the works had Coptic, Sogdian, or Turkish versions. Pahlavi as a religious language belonged only to Zoroastrians. Followers of the other religions, such as the Jews, Christians, Mandaean, Manichaeans, etc., could use Pahlavi

as the court language during the Sassanian period. Hence, the presence of Pahlavi script around the Persian Crosses found in South India does not relate them in any particular way to the Manichaeans, either as authors or as people intended for conversion.

c) *that the Manichaeans venerated the Cross, and that was similar to the Mount Cross*. There is still another question to be answered. Did the Manichaeans really venerate a Cross? According to Mani, Jesus did not die on the Cross. The one who died on the Cross was a substitute. Mani himself did not die on a cross. Imprisoned by orders of Shhanshah Bahram'a Mani died in fetters. His corpse was pierced through with a burning torch and then mutilated. The severed head was hung up over the city-gate of Bet-Lapat. Mani's earthly remains were later buried by his followers at Ctesiphon.<sup>40</sup> Hence the relevance of the question posed above.

If they did venerate a real cross, in what form was the cross presented for veneration? In a form equal or similar to the Madras Mount Cross? Is there anywhere else in the world a specimen of a definitely Manichaean Cross, which looks exactly or somewhat like the Mount Cross? These are matters to be established, and the burden of proof is on the proponents of the Manichaean thesis about the South Indian Persian Crosses.

38. See the chapter on "the spread of Manichaeism," in G. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.*, 117-134. Cf. also K. RUDOLF, *Gnosis* (Edinburgh 1983) 331-332

39. Cf. G. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.*, 74-76, 40.

40. See G. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.*, 41-42. The references are from the Manichaean *Homilies* and *Psalm book*. Cf. also K. RUDOLF, *Gnosis*, 330-331.



### **Conclusion**

The Manichaeon issue is now revived by some people who disagree with those who insist on the use of the so-called St. Thomas Cross in the churches. They do it even at the risk of the apostolic origin of our Church being logically denied. They want crucifix in the sanctuaries, and not

a simple Cross without the figure of the Crucified Lord. These people may have other reasons against the practice now being introduced of having only the St. Thomas Cross in our churches and sanctuaries, but to label the Persian Crosses of the St. Thomas Christians as Manichaeon is to oppose the new practice for the wrong reason.

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# Church as the Meeting Place of Liturgy and Theology

In this article we try to establish the foundational character of the Church in her relation with the liturgy and theology. The following reflections are systematized and codified according to the ancient principle '*lex orandi lex credendi*' which could be rendered into English as the 'law of prayer establishes the law of belief'. Here the law of prayer stands mainly for liturgy, and the law of belief stands for the faith of the Church and for theology. The fundamental thrust of this article is to bring out the necessity of a liturgical theology. Only a liturgical theology can point out the proper centrality of the Church in the total theological endeavour. This study is centred on two main issues: 1) what is liturgical theology; 2) Church as the place of encounter between liturgy and theology. The ultimate goal of this study is to establish the fact that liturgical theology is the 'primary theology'.

## I What is Liturgical Theology

In order to explain liturgical theology we have to return to the ancient patristic adage '*lex orandi lex*

*credendi*'<sup>1</sup>. The authorship of this saying is attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine (+463). The accepted translation of this among the scholars is – the law of prayer establishes the law of belief. It clearly means that it is the liturgy that establishes the belief, theology etc. The Fathers of the Church have given a very significant place to the liturgy in their writings. In fact, most of the patristic writings highlight the theological character of christian worship and liturgy. To this theological formula, they showed a respect similar to that of the apostle's creed. The saying, the liturgy establishes the law of belief, brings out the fact that liturgy has a determinative role in articulating the nature and character of theology. Among the Fathers it was accepted that liturgy is the homeland for theology. It is from this foundational principle that the theological expression 'liturgical theology' emerges.

The eastern theologians very often use the expression 'liturgical theology'. However, the expression remains an ambiguous one. Its ambiguity is manifested both in its content and

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1. Cf. J. P. Lang, *Dictionary of the Liturgy* (NY: 1989); P. E. Fink (ed), *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* (NY: 1990), 722; G. Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (London: 1982), 225 ff; E. Giese, "Perspektiven einer liturgischen Theologie", *Una Sancta* 24 (1969), 103–111; Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (Pueblo: 1984); P. de Clerck, "lex orandi lex credendi's Sens original et avatares historiques d'un adage equivoque" *Questiones liturgiques* 59 (1978).



implications. From a correct theological perspective, when we say liturgical theology its primary meaning is that theology is rooted in liturgy. In the early Church we see the system of seeing liturgy as the source of theology. Today the situation is rather different. There are quite a number of theologies which are neither rooted in liturgy nor in ecclesiology. It is the liturgy which expresses the mind of the Church. Many of the contemporary theologies are not able to express the mind of the Church because they are 'split theologies' from liturgy. Since they do not take into consideration seriously the profound character of God and the Church, theologies have lost their mystical character also.<sup>2</sup> A theology which has lost its ecclesial basis is a mere intellectual speculation. A similar problem can also be noted in the field of liturgy too. Even though the liturgies very often maintained the traditional patrimony, they have not always succeeded in bringing out the proper consciousness of the Church. The maintenance of the liturgical archaism alone was not enough to express the mind of the Church. Actually speaking ecclesial life is rooted on two pillars—liturgy and faith.

During the middle ages liturgy was not seen as the foundation of theology. This period is known as 'captivity years of liturgy'. The shallow approach to liturgy developed in the middle ages created a mere juridical and conceptual understanding of liturgy. As a result spirituality and theology became cut off from liturgy. But from the 'ressourcement' movement of the 20th century there is an

earnest attempt among theologians and liturgists to link radically once again theology and spirituality with liturgy. It is in this context that we speak of a liturgical theology. About the content and implications of liturgical theology there is no full unanimity of opinion among the theologians.

According to D. W. Fagerberg, the expression 'liturgical theology' denotes four distinct meanings. (i) theology of worship, (ii) theology from worship, (iii) liturgy as ontological condition for worship and (iv) the study and analysis of this ontological condition. According to him there are two basic theme in this thinking: (i) liturgical theology recognizes that the liturgical community has a foundational role in shaping the theology. Thus he brings out the ecclesiological basis of worship and theology. (ii) Liturgical theology is primarily what is transacted in historic liturgical rites and secondarily that which is uncovered by structural analysis of this rite.<sup>3</sup>

According to Cheslyn Jones liturgical theology means the following: (i) the study of liturgy which is one of the branches of theology in systematics (ii) a theological method that uses liturgy, (iii) the content of faith that is revealed in and through signs and symbols.<sup>4</sup> In the objective analysis liturgical theology is a theology which is deeply rooted in liturgical tradition and which expresses the deep meaning of christian worship.<sup>5</sup> When we say liturgical theology we do not mean a reduction of the entire theology into liturgy. It is also not intended that in all theological disciplines liturgy

2. A. Schmemann, "Liturgy and Theology", *GOTR* 17 (1972), 87.

3. D. W. Fagerberg, *What is Liturgical Theology: A Study in Methodology* (Minnesota: 1992), 9–13.

4. Cheslyn Jones, *The Study of Spirituality*, 6.

5. *The Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, 722.

should be dealt with. It is in the sense that all theological subjects should give priority to the faith of the Church. Because liturgy celebrates the faith of the Church.<sup>6</sup>

According to C. Lacugna, in the expression 'lex orandi lex credendi', or liturgical theology, the internal core of both liturgy and theology is doxology and praise. 'The law' mentioned here is the 'law of praise'. Liturgy is the music of the Church. It is in this music we grasp the voice, nature and character of the Church. This something which the Church sings is the connecting link between God and man. Lacugna comments that theology has yet to become doxology, in order to become liturgical in the proper sense. Doxologies are not definitions or scientific formulations. They are performative and ascriptive in character.<sup>7</sup>

Among the theologians who have given theological explanations to liturgical theology, Aidan Kavanagh ranks first according to my assessment. He has pointed out substantially the primary and central character of the liturgy (lex orandi) in the theological endeavour (lex credendi). In the explanation regarding the relation between the prayer and belief, he articulates the foundational character of the Church. It is in the believing community that the law of prayer and law of belief are joined together. "This stress is summed up in the patristic maxim 'legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi', a subtle formulation in which the predicate is all

important. For the predicate *statuat* does not permit these two fundamental laws of belief and worship in christian life to float apart or to be appeared to each other as in the tag, from *lex orandi* *lex credendi*. The verb '*statuat*' articulates the standard of believing and the standard of worshipping within the faithful assembly. The agent of believing is no less communitarian than the agent of worship. The agent of the one is in fact the agent of the other. The verb '*statuat*' subordinates the law of belief to the law of worship in just the same way, and for the same reasons our reception of God's word is subordinated to the presence of the presentation of that word to us in the act of its being revealed and proclaimed to us. Belief is always consequent upon encounter with the source of the grace of faith. Therefore Christians do not worship because they believe. They believe because the one in whose gift faith lies is regularly met in the act of communal worship. The *lex credendi* is thus subordinated to the *lex supplicandi* because both standards exist and function only within the worshipping assembly's own subordinating of itself to its ever present judge, saviour, and unifying spirit."<sup>8</sup> It is the law of worship which found or establishes the law of belief—rather as a foundation establishes a house or the virtue of justice founds the law. The axiom in all three cases is irreversible; it is not law which makes justice possible, not the house which establishes the foundation, not belief which enable worship. According to Kavanagh to reverse the formula is a kind of deviation from the original.

6. Schmemann, "Liturgy and Theology", 93.

7. V. Lacugna and K. McDonnell, "Returning from the Far Country: Thesis for a Contemporary Trinitarian Theology", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 41 (1988), 196; C. Lacugna, "Can Liturgy Again Become a Source for Theology", *Studia Liturgica* 19 (1989), 2-3.

8. A. Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, 92.



In this reversal there is the loosening of the original meaning also. "There is no doubt that the law of belief does indeed shape and influence the law of worship. But the maxim does not say this, nor does it need to. It says only that the latter constitutes or founds the former. The law of belief does not constitute the law of worship".<sup>9</sup>

There are theologians who have expressed their opinions with regard to this axiom in a slightly different manner. The prominent one among them is E. Kilmartin. He says that there are two main streams of thought that are implied in the *lex orandi lex credendi*. They are: the law of prayer establishes the law of faith, and the law of faith establishes the law of prayer. According to him in the original formula there is a tension with regard to what is the subject and what is the predicate. He holds the position that there is no separation of liturgy from faith, or faith from liturgy. Thus according to him the law of faith can establish the law of prayer. It is to this particular emphasis that theologians like Kavanagh expresses his disagreement. Moreover Pope Pius XII in his *Mediator Dei* says: "Let the law of belief determine the law of prayer" (*lex credendi legem statuat supplicandi*).<sup>10</sup>

In general we can say that liturgical theology means two basic realities. 1-A theology of liturgy: the study of liturgy in all its theological dimensions. 2-A theology drawn from liturgy: that is, liturgy is to be con-

sidered as the foundational reality and all the theological development should be envisioned on this basis. Liturgy is considered here as the source of theology.<sup>11</sup> All the fundamentals of faith are included in the liturgy. All the theological disciplines should be the explanation of this fundamental reality. Hence liturgical theology is known as the 'primary theology'. Liturgical act is the primary act. All other theologies should spring forth from this primary theology. Thus there are 'primary theology' and 'secondary theologies'.<sup>12</sup>

Liturgy has a very determinative role in the christian theology and life. It is the norm and measuring stick by which we can assess the different dimensions of christian life. According to eastern tradition to be a christian means to accept liturgy as the foundation of christian life. Liturgy is one of the infallible means of teaching of the Church. It is the saturated and condensed form of the faith of the Church. Liturgy is also the guardian of the sacred doctrines.<sup>13</sup> It ensures the people about the authentic teachings of the Church. This is the reason why liturgy considers the creed as an essential part of the celebration. The public confession of the creed is very essential in the liturgy. If it is not done *lex orandi* does not become *lex credendi*.<sup>14</sup>

## II Church as the Meeting Place of Liturgy and Theology

Actually speaking neither liturgy nor theology has any place apart from

9. Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, 92-93.

10. AAS 39 (1947), 540

11. Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (NY: 1975), 9 ff.

12. Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, 83.

13. *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, 495.

14. K. Rahner and H. Vorgrimler, *Dictionary of Theology* (NY: 1965), 275.

the concept of the Church. There is no liturgy without the Church and there is no Church without the liturgy. They are complementary to each other. It is in the liturgy that the quality and uniqueness of the Church are best expressed. All the teachings of the Church are also given in and through the liturgy. Even the formation of the scriptures is to be understood in the context of the liturgy. "Nor did the paractice of liturgical worship wait upon and depend from the written scripture as a living illustration of the sacred texts. Rather, the written texts of the christians Bible as they emerged, entred into worship patterns that were already established, especially in the synagogue, paschal and domestic usages from judaism which the earliest christians continued to employ even as they began to fill them with a new content".<sup>15</sup>

### 1. Liturgy is of the Church and the Church of the Liturgy

From the theological perspective liturgy means the commemoration and celebration of the salvific deeds of God performed in the history of salvation. Those salvific deeds become a living and active experience for us in and through the liturgy. Objectively speaking this takes place in the 'ecclesia'. The Church is the sacrament of Christ and by that reason she is the sacrament of universal salvation. In this sense the Church continues the salvific grace of Christ. Liturgy is the explanation and explicitaton of what the Church contains and believes. It is the Church itself, but explained in the experiential level. Liturgy is the explanation of the faith of the

Church herself. Since liturgy is so fundamentally related to the Church it should never be taken simply as a private business of a single person. It is the sum and substance of the entire deposit of faith. Church is the custodian of this faith and revelation. It is from the living faith of the Church in this revelation that even the liturgical traditions emerge and grow.<sup>16</sup> At the same time it is through the various liturgies that the Church expresses herself. The ancient Fathers of the Church have this profound sense of liturgy and the Church. It is from the liturgical sense of the great Fathers that this liturgical sense developed. They saw liturgy as a mystery rooted in the mystery of Christ. All the various aspects of the Church are related to the liturgy. It is to the Church that the revelation is given. It is in the Church that we celebrate the liturgy. Liturgy reveals the inner dimensions of the Church. It is through the liturgy that the relation between the mystical Body and the Church develops. The deepest dimensions of human salvation are revealed through the liturgy.<sup>17</sup>

### 2. Liturgy as the life of the Church

To consider and believe liturgy as the life of the Church is a sublime theological thinking. This is the mystical and eastern approach to theology and ecclesial life. It is in this mystery that we see and grasp the nature of the Church as a worshipping community. Moreover, liturgy manifests, defines, explains and embraces the entire Church.<sup>18</sup> Church is a community consecrated and sealed by the liturgy. Liturgy is

15. Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, xiii.

16. *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, 495.

17. I. H. Dalmais, *The Liturgy and the Mystery of Salvation. The Church at Prayer*, A. G. Martimort (ed), (London: 1988), 190 ff.

18. Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 12.



known as the central nervous system of the Church. Because we need liturgy to explain anything sensible and meaningful regarding the Church. Liturgy uses a central, wholistic and total approach when it explains the nature of the Church. Hence liturgy is a theological imperative as far as ecclesiology is concerned. It is from the liturgy that an integral vision of Church is obtained. The deep sense of the ecclesial communion is also to be seen and assessed in the context of liturgy. In short the ecclesia is best expressed in the liturgy. Liturgy is that of the Church. What it contains and explains is the life of the Church. It has nothing to proclaim apart from the life of the Church which is but the message of Christ. There is no private liturgy. It is a contradiction in terms. A private liturgy is against the very nature of liturgy and the nature of the theology of the Church. All liturgies are formed and formulated in view of the participation of the entire ecclesia.<sup>19</sup> Concretely realized <sup>21</sup>

### 3. Liturgy—the Activity of the Church Par-Excellence

Liturgy is the means by which the creature meets the Creator. The most sublime activity which the Church performs is her liturgical activity. According to the eastern tradition the reality expressed by the terms 'Church', 'tradition', 'liturgy' could even be identified. The depth dimension of the Church is narrated only in the liturgy. It is in the liturgy and in connection with the liturgy that we come to know what the Church is. It does not mean that

there are no other means other than liturgy to manifest the Church-life. It means primarily that it is the liturgy that represents fully the Church. Liturgy is the unique activity of the Church and nothing can be compared to that. It is not just one of the activities of the Church. It is the central and unique activity. This is known as the 'very act' of the Church. Liturgy is the 'lived faith' of the Church. Only the liturgy can constantly present Jesus amidst us.<sup>20</sup> The excellent form of what the Church believes is to be found in what the Church prays. It is the praying Church that is the real Church<sup>21</sup>. Thus liturgy, especially the celebration of the Holy Qurbana is the deepest and sublime work of the Church. The ancient dictum of Ignatius of Antioch—that the Eucharist makes the Church—expresses the same thing. In the documents of Vat. II we can see the profound relation between eucharist and the Church (UR 15, LG 26, CD 11, SC 10).

### 4. Liturgy Expresses the Identity of the Church

The uniqueness, identity and individuality of a Church is determined according to the nature of the liturgy it celebrates. It is in the liturgy that the specific identity of a Church is deposited. The different apostolic Churches through their different liturgies manifest and proclaim their own specific identity. This profound relation between the Church and the liturgy is a mystery. The Church is best seen, expressed and manifested in the liturgy. It is from the liturgy that the theology of the Church should

19. Cheslyn Jones, *The Study of Spirituality*, 20.

20. A Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism. The Rite of Christian Initiation* (NY: 1978), xii.

21. A. Nichols, *The Shape of Catholic Theology* (Edinburgh: 1991), 181.

emerge. The profound character of the Church is rooted in her own liturgy. From the liturgy to the Church and from the Church to the liturgy is almost axiomatic in christian theology.<sup>22</sup>

### 5. Liturgy as Inseparable from the Church

As language is imperative for the existence of a human society, so in a similar way liturgy is an existential necessity for the existence of the Church. The members of a society communicate each other, and are united each other in and through a language. When a language disappears, to a very great extent the community that is united in and through the language is also scattered. According to this perspective a human society does not merely speak a language but it is the language it speaks. Similarly the Christian Churches do not merely use liturgies, but they are actually the liturgies themselves. The Churches adore the true God only through the liturgies. With out the liturgies the churches are deprived of its content and meaning. Therefore the liturgy itself is the Church. Both liturgy and the Church are co-terminus and convertible.<sup>23</sup> The liturgy of the Church is not mere rite. It is the fullest expression of the Church itself. When we understand deeply the place and role of liturgy in the Church we can see that there is not much difference. The Church should celebrate its proper liturgy. This is one of the most foundational themes of liturgical theology. Whenever and wherever liturgy does not present herself as the all-embracing activity of the Church,

then both the meaning of liturgy and the meaning of Church collapse. In its deepest sense, Christian liturgy in its nature, structure and content is the manifest expression of the Church and its explicit realization.<sup>24</sup> It does not in any way presuppose that we have to see the Church as a mere cult, "It is not the Church that exists for the cult, but the cult for the Church, for her welfare, for her ground into the full measure of the stature of Christ".<sup>25</sup> Jesus does not want to establish a cultic society but a society of love, salvation, grace and new life. But it does not in any way mean that liturgy is a secondary affair for the Church. Liturgy is inseparable from the Church; Church is also inseparable from the liturgy. One is explained and deepened by the other. It is the liturgy which maintains the Church as the Body of Christ, People of God, and Temple of the Spirit. Out side the mystery of the liturgy the mystery of the Church is also not revealed. E. R. Hambye has explained well the inseparability between the liturgy and the Church; "In fact the liturgy is the Church itself, for, the Church finds her focussing centre through which the whole world is converted to Christ, the crucified, risen, ascended, ever glorious Lord. In as much as the Church finds in the liturgy the full meaning of her divine-human character, thus the same happens in each member who finds in the liturgy both his own foundation and his model. The mystery of divine life reveals the mystery of human life. For, in the liturgy and its life, the ongoing process of deification is unfolded".<sup>26</sup>

22. Schmemann, Introduction to Liturgical Theology, 23.

23. Kavanagh, On Liturgical Theology, 97.

24. Schmemann, Introduction to Liturgical Theology, 23.

25. Schmemann, Introduction to Liturgical Theology, 23.

26. E. R. Hambye, Dimensions of Eastern Christianity (Kottayam: 1983). 14.



## 6. Church as a Worshipping Community.

Church as the worshipping community is one of the classical themes of eastern ecclesiology and liturgical theology. Worshipping community is the explicit realization of the people of God. It is the Holy Spirit that unites the people as a worshipping community. That means worship is the activity of the people united in the Spirit. The Church worships in union with the present, past and future Church. According to eastern theology worship is adoration and praise which the Church oblates to the trinitarian God.<sup>27</sup> Only the liturgy can express all the different dimensions of the Church. It is actually the heart of the Church. It is also known as the living dogmatics of the Church. Liturgy is the fullest manifestation of the faith of the Church and it is the liturgy that makes the Church a worshipping community.<sup>28</sup> "The whole christian life as a memorial is liturgy, since the pattern of the life in Christ is the liturgy, and since the latter is the source of everything i.e. the communion of lives. This is the basic reason why in the eastern Christ any spiritual reality is bestowed as a liturgical reality. For no other human language and expression can render better than the liturgy the constant activity of God in and through the Church. Even Sacred Scriptures are liturgy in as much as they encompass the same ongoing operation of incarnation and deification, and since they cannot be fully understood outside both the yearly cycle and each actual celebration".<sup>29</sup>

## 7. Renewal of the Liturgy is the Renewal of the church also

We have already seen the deep rooted and complementary character

of the relation between liturgy and the Church. One is not without the other. Theologically speaking, liturgical renewal can be done only in the context of the proper liturgical traditions of the Church. Since the nature of liturgy radically affects the nature of the Church, liturgical renewal will have a direct impact on the nature of the Church also. That means liturgical renewal is not a simple renewal of a text but the renewal of the Church. The Church knows herself and forms herself in the liturgy. Liturgy is the brain and chunck of the ecclesia. What is to be done in the liturgical renewal is the restoration and renewal of the proper traditions of the Church. The venerable patrimonies of the Church should be respected and liturgy should never simply bow its head before the temporal needs of the day, though it should not deny this fact also. "We thus discover that basic approach of the eastern Church according to which the liturgy even in its ritual expressions, is so fundamental, so rich, so coextensive to spirituality, theology, and the authentic life of the Church. It is such a close-knit and dynamic reality that to change the liturgy would almost amount to change the Church. If understood in the right spiritual outlook such a view is really as great as fruitful; yet it could also become bogged down in ritualism, sentimentalism, and juridicism making the Church a mere cultic community"<sup>30</sup>

## Conclusion

By means of contrast and synthesis we were trying to illustrate the proper centrality of the Church in world of theology. This foundational character of the Church is to be understood

27. N. A. Nissiotis, "Orthodoxy an Ecclesial and Worshipping Community", 22

28. Nissiotis, "Worship, Eucharist and Intercommunon", *Studia Liturgica* 2(1963), 219.

29. E. R. Hambye, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 14-15.

30. E. R. Hambye, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 15.

## Book Reviews

*Zukunft aus der Kraft des Konzils. Die ausserordentliche Bischofssynode '85. Die Dokumente mit einem Kommentar* Von WALTER KASPR Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder, 1986, 112 pp., DM 14,80.

The particular secretary of the extraordinary Synod of Bishops held in late 1985 is presenting in this small volume the two documents of this assembly together with a commentary. He evaluates this synod as a spiritual event in the life of the Church by which the Second Vatican Council has been approved and explained giving, at the same time, practical perspectives for the immediate future. In the second part of his reflections, the author stresses four points: The mystery of Jesus Christ and of the Church; Reconsideration of the sources of Church renewal: The Word of God and Liturgy; the renovation of the communio-structure; the mission of the Church in today's world. Much has been said in this book and it recommends itself for a thorough study. It would have been too much expectation to find here also an evaluation of pertinent interventions of the Eastern Fathers whose contribution to the Synod is appreciated where the author speaks of the communio-structure of the Church. It is to Eastern theologians to develop this point in particular studies to make Vatican II and this Synod fruitful for all the individual Churches forming the Catholic Church.

J. Madey

*Orthodox Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.* Edited by GENNADIOS LIMOURIS and NOMIKO MICHAEL VAPORIS (= Faith and Order Paper No. 128), Geneva (Switzerland), WCC Publications, 1985, 168 pp., Ppb. US\$ 7.95, + 5.60.

This book was published by Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA 02146, U. S. A., on behalf of the World Council of Churches. It appeared also as no. 2, 1985, of "The Greek Orthodox Theological Review". The contents of this publication are the papers produced by an Inter-Orthodox symposium

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in the context of liturgical theology. Liturgical theology is rooted in the patristic teaching-*lex orandi lex credendi*. Liturgical theology is not a mere historical study about liturgy. It is a theological principle and methodology which insists on the fact that all theology should come out of this fundamental vision. A theology which stems from the liturgy is liturgical

theology and hence it is primary theology. In this perspective ecclesiology is a reality intimately related to liturgy. Because liturgy has nothing to explain apart from the mysteries of the Church which is nothing but the mystery of God. Hence there is an intimate and interlocking connection between liturgy and ecclesiology.

Rev. Dr. Joseph Kallarangatt



held at Brookline itself. Forty-five hierarchs and theologians of the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches discussed there the so-called "Lima Document" and its impact on Orthodox Christianity. The authors of the different contributions belong to quite a number of Churches: the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Russian Church, the Romanian Church, the Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church in America, the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Church (K. M. George). The list of participants closing this publication proves the interest in this symposium in many quarters, ecclesiastical, academical and others, all over the world. We therefore, wish this volume in every theological library.

J. Madey

**JUERGEN PEYLO: Christen in Jerusalem. Das Erbe einer reichen Tradition.** Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1986, 48 pp. + 16 coloured slides (diapositives), DM 54,00.

Christians of any time and any culture have had a living interest in the places where our Lord and God Jesus Christ lived and fulfilled the work of redemption. The history of the holy places and lands is rather a complicated one. Nevertheless, the pilgrim to the Holy Land, be it physically or only spiritually, would certainly fail, if he or she considered it only as a field of architectural and archaeological interest. Christians of different and distant cultures and traditions have brought their way of life and worship to Jerusalem. This audiovisual presents a good introduction to their lives and Churches. The booklet can serve well to explain the slides to an audience. One of the presuppositions of today's ecumenism is to know each other as best as one can, and to accept the other in his different mode of being; only then one will be enabled to love each other, too.

J. Madey

**Christa Schaffer: Aufgenommen ist Maria in den Himmel.** Vom Heimgang der Gottesmutter in Legende, Theologie und liturgischer Kunst der Frühzeit (= *Studia Patristica et Liturgica*, 15. Beiheft, & EIKONA. Liturgische Bildkunst in der Ost- und Westkirche, 2). Regensburg: Kommissionsverlag Friedrich Pustet, 1985, 61 pages, DM 12.80.

The mystery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary called in the Eastern Churches *koimesis* (dormition) or *shunqyō* (passing over, transition) is in itself a promise for and the hope of redeemed man, integrated and incorporated into the body of Christ, the Church, by baptism, chrismation and Eucharist. In this small booklet, the author presents us with the belief of the early Christians as it is finding a living expression in the legends. Thereafter she turns her attention to the evidence of the Fathers add in the Eastern liturgy quoting richly the authors of the Byzantine office and the writings of e. g. John of Damascus and Patriarch Germanos of Constantinople. Unfortunately, the witnesses of the so rich Syriac tradition have not been taken under consideration. We hope that, in the future, this Christian heritage will find the attention of the Western liturgical scholars and students, when the new edition of the *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit* (ed. by Francis Acharya of Kurisumala Ashram) will have found its way to the Western libraries. In her last chapter, the author concentrates on the iconography presenting 19 illustrations (8 in colour) found in the East in the West. The Eastern influence of the

iconography also in Roman and other Western churches will certainly make the reader aware that the veneration of the mother of Christ has had its origin in the Christian East. May the booklet find a good reception particularly with those who are charged with transmitting the Christian doctrine to the faithful.

J. Madey

**Vladimir Ivanov: Das grosse Buch der russischen Ikonen.** Herausgegeben durch das Patriarchat von Moskau. Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder, 224 pages, 168 illustrations in colour, cloth DM 128,00

This majestic volume is edited by the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow both in German and in Italian. It is prefaced by the director of the publications department of the patriarchate, Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yuryev, saying that "it is the aim of the Russian Orthodox Church, to bring its own treasures closer to the Christian world of the West". In fact, the author is one of the leading Russian historian of arts and theologians who makes clear the relation of the icon with piety and worship of the Russian people. The nine chapters of the work follow the historical development beginning with the iconography of the 10th-12th centuries. The subsequent centres of iconography were at Novgorod (13th-15th cent.), Pskov (13th-15th cent.) and Moscow (14th-15th cent.). There was a certain decline in iconography, especially in the 19th century the reasons of which are described in detail. Present iconography has returned to the very roots. The last chapter is therefore dedicated to our century and to the role of the icons in present day church life. The book closes with a detailed description of the 154 icons reproduced in this book as well as of the 14 photographs giving some insights into the life and work of the icon painters and the veneration of the icons by clergy and other faithful. It is for the first time that a certain number of icons belonging to the 400 icons collection of the Theological Academy of the Moscow Patriarchate was published. The volume is indeed a standard work on Russian iconography, its history, art and the theology and should find its way to many readers, particularly to libraries of ecclesiastical and religious institutions.

J. Madey

**D. J. Chitty, (tr.), *The Letters of Ammonas successor of Saint Antony*, Oxford, 1979** (revised and with an introduction by S. Brock).

This small book contains 14 extant letters of Aba Ammonas, a disciple of Aba Antony the Great of Egypt. It deals with several vital topics: need to ask for spiritual gift, approaching God with the whole heart, the trials and temptations from Satan, discernment of the will of God and spiritual directions. These topics are of perennial interest. We have only scanty information regarding Aba Ammonas. There are also some sayings attributed to him in the "Apophthegmata Patrum." He was 14 years at Skete, visited Aba Antony, became his disciple and after 354 directed the monks of Pispir.

The present translation is a revision by S. Brock of the one made by D. J. Chitty who devoted his life to the study of early Egyptian and Palestinian monasticism.

Fr. G. Chediath



# News

## 1. Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil CBCI President

The CBCI meeting held in Delhi in the first week of March, 1994 elected Archbishop Joseph Powathil, Metropolitan Archbishop of Changanacherry, as the new President of CBCI. The election of Mar Powathil who is also the President of Kerala Catholic Bishops' Conference (KCBC) is a recognition both for his personal qualities and for the Syro-Malabar Church. Archbishop Powathil is a promotor of Ecumenism and a strong advocate of the theology of the Individual Churches. His untiring dedication to the theology of the Individual Churches finally resulted in the recognition of three individual churches in India with equal rights and duties and for the re-structuring of the CBCI.

Geevarghese Mar Thimotheos, the Metropolitan of Thiruvalla of the Syro-Malankara Church, and Abp. Allan D.-Lastic Metropolitan of Delhi, are the vice-Presidents. Rt. Rev. Dr. Charles Sorang, bishop of Daltangunj is the Secretary General.

## 2. Pastoral Guidelines on Marriages between members of the Catholic Church and of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church

These Guidelines together with the agreement between the two churches on Inter-Church Marriages are officially published on 25th January 1994 from Vatican. The Document on Pastoral Guidelines contains 25 points concerning the celebration of Inter-Church Marriages. There are detailed directions on the preparation, celebration and pastoral care of these marriages. The bilateral agreement between these two churches and the Pastoral Guidelines mutually accepted will certainly help for a fruitful ecumenism and church-unity.

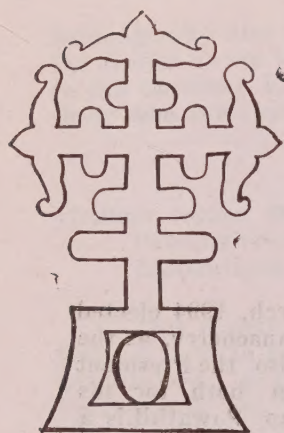
## 3. Dialogue between Catholic-Lutheran Churches

The joint Commission between Catholic and Lutheran Churches is to publish the results of its study and discussions under the title "Final Document." This is a historic document as far as ecumenism is concerned. Luther was excommunicated for teaching that faith alone can justify and sanctify man. Catholic Church teaches that faith without action is useless. The discussions, studies and the joint statement should be evaluated in this historic theological context.

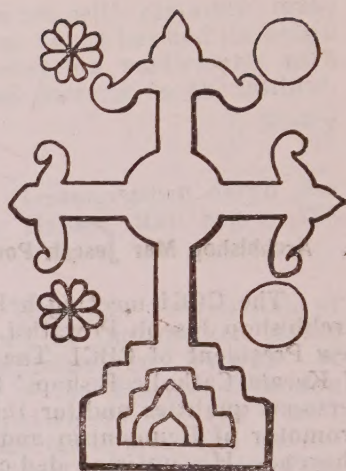
The June and September issues of Christian Orient of this year will be published as a combined issue.

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF CROSSES

(cfr pp. 24 - 35)



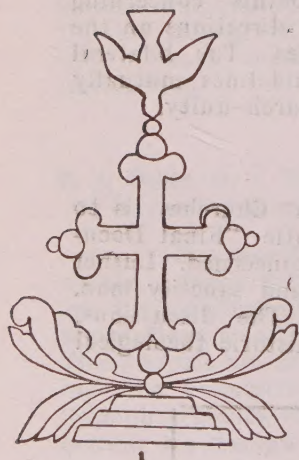
A Cross found at the monastery of Rabban Hormisdas, Irak.



A Cross found at the Saint Meschinta Church, Mossul, Irak.



A Cross on the Baptismal Font, reputed to be of the 9th century AD, at Valiapally, Kaduthuruthy.



The miraculous Cross at the Big Mount Church, Madras, discovered in AD 1547, now usually presented as the St. Thomas Cross.



Reproduction of the Crosses found by the Portuguese in 1523 AD, at the ancient St. Thomas Tomb Church, Mylapore (Cf. G. Correa, *Lendas da India*, II, 723).



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I hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/-

Dr Thomas Mannooramparampil  
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